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# AS YOU WERE,

BY  
EDWARD STREETER **BILL!**  
AUTHOR OF "DERE MABLE"



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**“AS YOU WERE, BILL!”**



**"I BEEN TAKIN A MEMORY COURSE"**

# *“As You Were, Bill!”*

BY

EDWARD STREETER

Author of “Dere Mable,” “Thats me all over, Mable,” “Same old Bill, eh Mable!” “Love Letters of Bill to Mable”

*WITH 42 ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK-AND-WHITE BY*

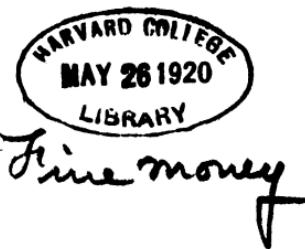
G. WILLIAM BRECK  
(“Bill Breck”)



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# *“As You Were, Bill!”*

## *Dere Mable:*

This is the first letter I ever rote you with civil close on. Its kind of clumsy at the start. I dont seem to be abel to get into it like I could in a uniform cause you got to think of the creases now.

It seems funny to be down here so far from Philopolis lookin for a job. Speshuly when I spent the last two years duckin em. I havnt seen Uncle Charlie yet about the one he offered me. I wanted to get out of my uniform first before somebody vaxinated me again. I ran into Angus MacKenzie, the skotch fello, today. Hes down here lookin for a job to. Angus says small towns for small men. He said he was goin to study all the different bisnises in town. He didnt care if it took him a couple of days. Then hed get a job in the one he liked best. The reason most fellos didnt succeed was because they jumped into the first thing that came along.

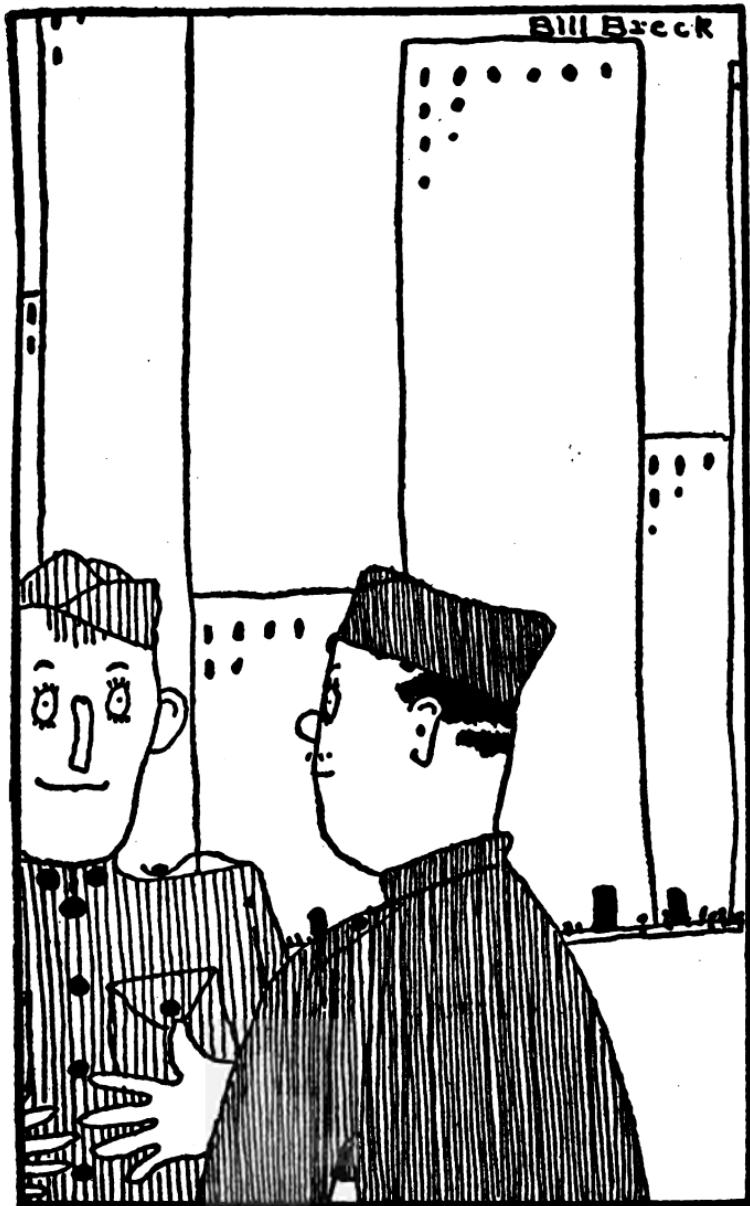
I told Angus about Uncle Charlie an his export an import bisnis. I guess hed be tickled to death to get another fello like me what had traveled and learned to talk all kinds of languiges.

Angus said that was just the kind of a job he was lookin for. Then he ast what was it.

I told him the ex an import bisnis was a kind of a tradin skeme. Besides makin money you went around the world on boats an saw funny lookin places an peeple. He says those is the words the recruitin sargent used when he got him to inlist. Hes all thru with free edukashun. Theres horses an diggin in it somewhere.

You got to be pashunt with a skotchman. The only thing he can grasp quick is a dollar bill. I showed him a trade for example. I borrow money enuff to buy a boat load of dry prunes. I take them to Africa an swap em for a boat load of elefunts tusks. I come home an swap the tusks for twice as many prunes. I go to Africa an swap em for twice as many elefunts tusks. For these I get four times as many dry prunes. Angus said I neednt take another trip. It reminded him of one of those patent ways of puttin yourself to sleep. It looked like a fine bisnis for a fello that was crazy about dry prunes an elefunts tusks. He wasnt. Personally he wanted to get into something where money came into it somewhere. He said if Id give him the adress of the poor simp that lent me money enuff to buy the boat load of prunes in the first place that would do him.

We both wanted to get into some civil close



**"I RAN INTO ANGUS MACKENZIE, THE SKOTCH FELLO TODAY"**

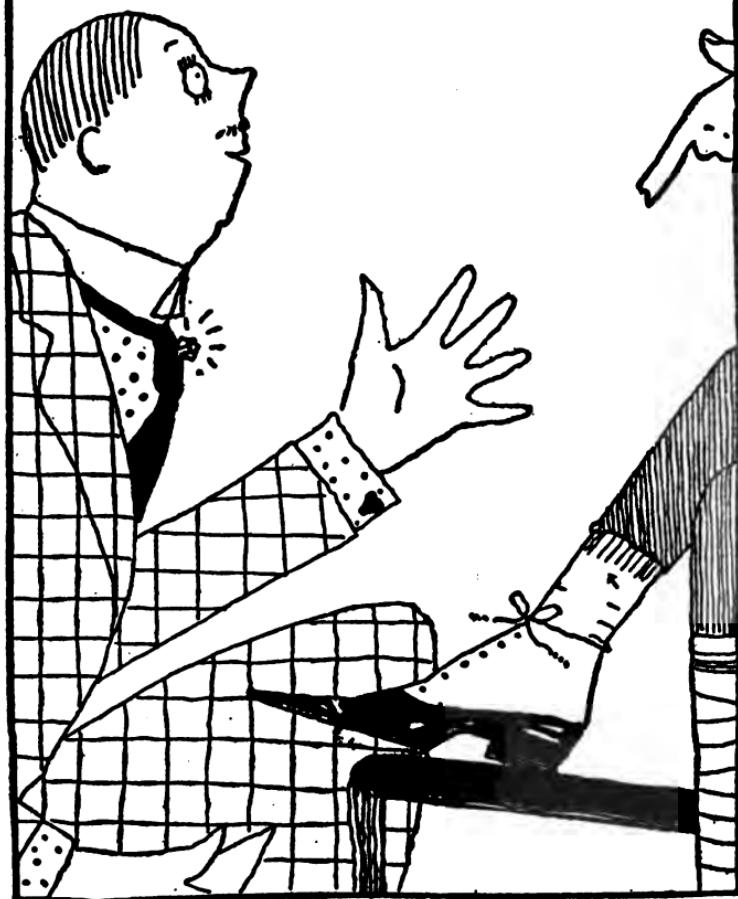
before another war started an the M.P.s got us. So we decided to buy a whole new outfit before we did anything else. I didnt know as much then as I do now. We found out right away what they mean when they talk about how the war has changed us. Its our feet. Neither of mine will ever be the same again. Ever since I been wearin army shoes they seem to have run like a pan cake that's bilt to loose.

A fello brought us a pair of shoes shaped like a stilleto. I didnt expect em shaped like army shoes of course. But these was dangerus. If you ever got foolin around an kicked a fello it would be like stickin him with a bayonut.

The shoe fello couldnt understand. He said these was called Bisnis Mens Delites they was so broad. Angus says they ought to ishue them to the calvery. They could put em on backwards an use the toes for spurs.

Just to get started somewheresto we bought a pair that didnt hurt much when we was sittin down. The fellow says they was only \$13.50 dollars. I explained how I wasnt buying em by the dozen like bananas or anything. I just wanted a pair to walk in, if I could. He said we was lucky. Wed run into a sale. It was probably the last time wed ever buy a pair of shoes at that price, which was the only sensibul thing hed said.

Bill Breck



"A FELLO BROUGHT US A PAIR OF SHOES SHAPED LIKE A STILETTO"

6        "AS YOU WERE, BILL!"

He told us how the price of cowskin had gone up on account of the shortness of grass or something. If we knew how much he made on a pair wed hate to take em. Angus says he did anyway. The least they could do was to give away a pair of crutches with every pair like cupons.

Of course we gave up the idear of buyin a new outfit right there. Nobody but a banker or a house painter could afford that. It was just a questshun of what you could leave of without bein arrested. Angus said a fello goin into bisnis ought to have a suit. He shows good judgement sometimes. I hate buying suits tho. They stick you in one of those lookin glasses where you see parts of you you havnt seen for years. I dont know anything that makes me feel bluer except Welsh rabbit.

By hanging on to a few army things that didnt show we managed to look like civilyans again. I didnt feel like one tho. It makes me pannicky out in the street. Everything so light it feels as tho I was walkin around in my underclose. (If youll excuse my menshunin them.)

Were not goin to see Uncle Charlie till tomorrow. It would look to much like we wanted the job bad. Angus was scared he mightnt have a job for to of us. I guess he will tho cause if he dont take Angus he cant have me. Angus says

## "AS YOU WERE, BILL!" 7

that aint right. Now Im out of the army I got other people to think of beside myself. I guess when I tell Uncle Charlie he wont take any chances.

Well, Mable, the next time I rite Ill probably be in the ex an import bisnis an on my way to China or Seeattle or some place. Its awful hot here. If a fello could make a fountin pen that flew as easy as I do hed be rich. Im getting to look like those picturs of fanims in India.

very warmly yours

*Bill*

### *Dere Mable:*

Me an Angus an Uncle Charlie is all in the ex an import bisnis together now. We had to turn him down the first time tho. I hated to disappoint him but he didnt want to hire anybody. He was lookin for volunteers.

Bein in the ex an import bisnis we expected to find him sittin on the docks swappin elefunts tusks or countin bananas. Insted he was on the top floor of a bilding that must have snow on the roof all year around. It struck me as a foolish place. Uncle Charlie just had to drag all the ex an imports up 60 flites of stairs an then drag em down again. Thats the beauty of gettin new blood in

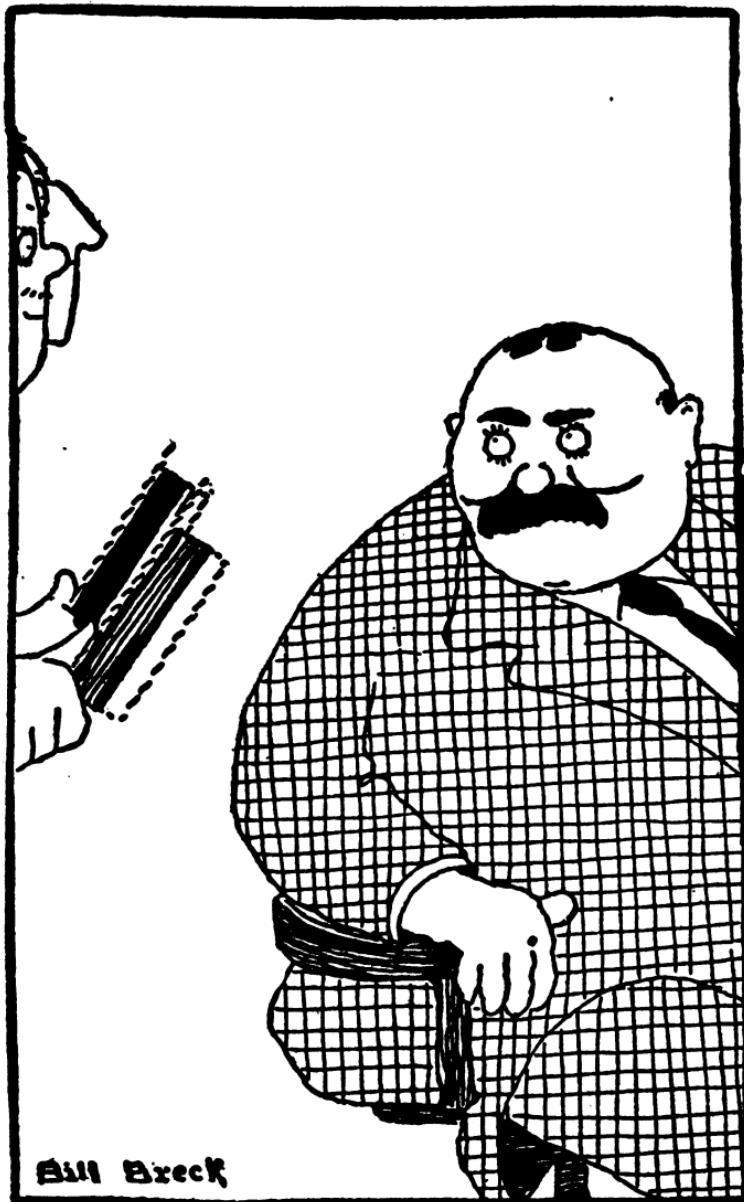
8        "AS YOU WERE, BILL!"

a bisnis. They can see things old blood cant. Angus says maybe Uncle Charlie didnt drag the stuff himself. That might be what he was gettin us for. Angus gets morbid sometimes.

Inside the office there was a lot of fellos workin on stools. I dont mean they was repairing em or anything. Its hard to make you understand. Bisnis is almost as tecknickle as the army. I hadnt seen Uncle Charlie since I had the meesels but I was sure he wasnt one of those fellos. They all wore their garters on their sleeves. I suppose they held their sox up with cuf linx.

We found Uncle Charlie in a room by himself. I never saw a fello with less corners. He must get into his desk chair with a shoe horn. The old boy was glad to see us. Kept askin about Abagail Fitzyou an whether any new fronts had gone up on Main street an was the kid sisters teeth comin in straight. He acted like we was makin a call. I got scared he might have forgot we came to talk about bisnis.

At last I stopped the bull by the horns. I says "Uncle Charlie, were both bisnis men. Money is time. Lets sit right down on brass tacks. If we come in this bisnis with you whats in it for us?" That struck me as neet. You dont want to be blunt in bisnis. If people can see what youre talkin about to easy they think youre not sharp.



**"HE MUST GET INTO HIS DESK CHAIR WITH A SHOE HORN"**

Uncle Charlie blushed and says "Well Ill be hanged." I says "Yes, sir." Polite. Thats me all over, Mable. Then I told him about Angus. How we was buddies an would have to have jobs close together. If there wasnt enuff jobs just then we was willin to double up on the same one for a while. Providin of course that we each got the same pay. That seemed pretty square an solid to me.

You could see Id made an impresshun on Uncle Charlie. He sounded like a radyater that isnt well. Then he shot his cuffs an says hed take us on at \$10 dollars a week. If we worked hard an studied the bisnis it would be no time before we was knockin down 12 or 14. Say a couple of years.

It wouldnt have been so bad if hed insulted me when I was alone. I hated to have Angus there to. I controlled myself. Just got up quiet and says the only reason wed come to him first was because he was my Uncle. I thought he was going to faint. We didnt wait to find out.

The hardest part about gettin a job down here is knowin where to start. Angus said he knew where wed finish if we didnt get one quick. If I was in Philopolis I could run down to Hawks drug store an find out about all the jobs in town. The druggists here aint so interested.

We bought a newspaper an looked up the Help Wanted Males. There seemed to be an awful shortage in expert plummars, an expert mekaniks an expert cigar makers. The only other kind of a fello they wanted was office boys. Nobody seemed to need general experts. Fellos with experience an good bisnis heads but who didnt know much about anything in particular.

We looked again the next two days. Angus says the fellos that didnt go to war had all the jobs that take brains an no knolege. So Saturday we decided wed go an talk to Uncle Charlie again. Hed probably seen his mistake by that time.

Uncle Charlie wasnt nearly as surprised to see us as he ought to have been. Ast me what I thought I could do best. I says anything at all. I dont believe in a fello braggin. He said hed take us both at our face value an \$10 dollars a week.

He made me his private secretary. I sit near the door an keep back the crowds. He says when anybody came in an ast for anybody I was to tell em where to go. That was just the job for me. I could tell most of em where to go before they opened their mouth. I have a desk right near the door with nothing on it but a telefone an the office boy.

He put Angus in the filin department. I guess

he saw hed be better at mekaniks than brains. I dont know exactly what he does but he tells me he files papers. I should think it would be easier to cut them with sissors. Uncle Charlie is a little old fashuned Im afraid.

He told us to study the ex and import bisnis in our spare time. Wed like it better when we knew all about shippin an boats. I went to the library an got a book called the Voage of the Sally Ann. I hadnt been studyin more than to minits when a big fat fello came in. He looked like he might have sold pensils in his better days. I dont believe in jumpin at delusions tho. I says "Well what seems to be the troubel?" He tried to make friends right away. Wanted to know who the devil I was. When I told him I was Uncle Charlies private secretary he looked imbaresed. Said he wanted to see Uncle Charlie about that oar proposishun.

Of course that was foolish cause Uncle Charlie didnt even own a row boat. If he had hed have bought oars with it. So I says "Go sell your oars to the Swiss navy. This is an ex an import bisnis. Do you think we row around the world?" He acted like somebodied insulted him. Says wed hear from him later. I says the later the better. Its great to be out of the army where you can boss somebody besides horses. I thought the tipe-

Bill Bieck



**"HE ACTED LIKE SOMEBODIED INSULTED HIM"**

riters would swallo their chewin gum laughin.

I was thinking if I could get rid of em all as easy it ought to be a good job. After a while Uncle Charlie came out with his hat on. He sez he couldnt understand why old man Pendergast hadnt showed up about that oar proposishun. He was goin over to see him. I ast when he was goin to be back sos I could be out to lunch. It wasnt my fault tho. How was I goin to know his customers looked like peanut waggon men?

Well, Mable I guess Ive told you enuff to let you know were gettin along fine in bisnis. Of course were not makin much now. If Uncle Charlie grows any fatter tho he wont be able to get into his office. Then hell have to take us into the firm. Somebodies got to get in an see whats goin on. Were bankin on that.

I must quit an go to bed. If I dont get to sleep before Angus I never will.

retiringly  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Id have rote you sooner only I been takin a memory course. I got so interested I forgot. I had to do something cause I been with Uncle

Charlie now two weeks. He hasnt even men-suned a raise. If he dont give me a better job how can he tell wether Im any good or not?

I got thinkin about that the other day. I often think when Im workin. It helps to pass the time. Then I came across a story in a magazine about a fello in Kokomoko, Oklo. He didnt have no memory at all. He started in working at \$10 dollars a week. Then he took a memory course. In a few days the boss shot his pay to \$5000 dollars a year. The first thing he knew hed kicked out the boss an was running the bisnis himself. Now hes forgot how much hes worth.

When he started tho he was in awful shape. Hed forget to wake up in the mornin and then be late to the office. Hed go out to mail a letter an forget to come back. The first thing he knew hed find himself at the ball game. Hed forget what time it was an quit at hapast four insted of hapast five. He got so he couldnt remember who he owed money to.

You could tell it wasnt a fake cause they gave the fellos name. He says now hes got 500 dates right at his fingers ends. I wouldnt want that many tho. A fello couldnt keep half them.

The story went on to say how everybodies mind was a sive. Just to prove it they ast a lot of questions. Like who wrote the Mona Liza an

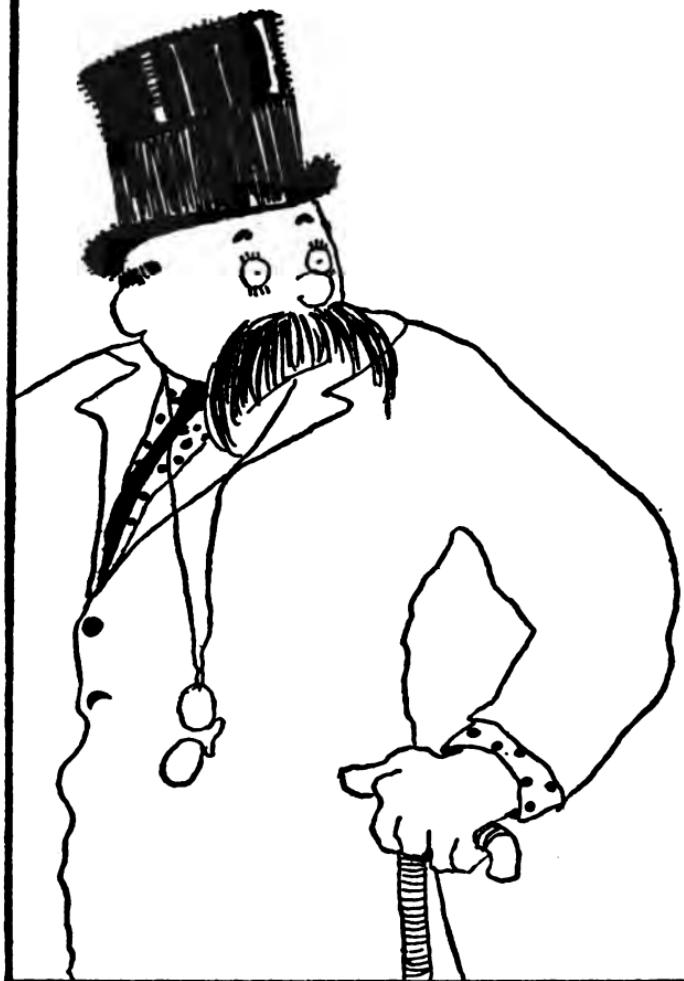
who painted Rafyuls Dyin Munk. They had me there. I got thinkin of the things Id forgot till I got scared.

I tried to get Angus interested. He said as long as he could remember week ends on Saturdays he was satisfied. When I told him his brain was like a sive he said it was just as solid as mine if not more. I bet he couldnt tell me who the Pry Minister of Itily was. Angus says he wasnt goin to get into no religious argumints. His grandfather got killed in one.

The only place Angus is up to times is quittin hour. Then hes ahead of them. I explained to him about the fello in Kokomoko, Oklo. All you had to do to get like him was tear of a cupon. Then they sent you the course. If you didnt like it you could send it back without payin a cent. Angus couldnt see whod be simp enuff to like it under those conditions.

So we tore of a cupon. The first lesson was about rememberin peoples names. It certainly is simple. You conect them with their faces. Funny nobody ever thought of that before. For instance suppose a fello came in the office with big whiskers on. He said his name was Brice. If you hadnt had your memory trained youd probably try to remember that. An the next time he came in youd just look at him with your mouth open. Then hed get sore

Bill Bixby



"THE FIRST THING YOU THINK OF IS A WALRUS"

an walk out an wouldnt come back any more.

If your memorys trained its different. You look at his whiskers an the first thing you think of is a walrus. That makes you think of the artik. That makes you think of ice. That makes you cold—brr. There you are. Whenever youd see this fello youd grab his hand to give yourself a chance to think. Then youd say "Walrus, artik, brr—ice, Brice." Only youd say it to yourself of course. Then out loud youd say "Hello there, Mr. Brice." That tikkles him to death.

After wed read the first lesson I liked the idear so I was almost for sendin the money. Angus has a good head tho. He said there was certain things about it he didnt like. So we copied it out an sent it back.

The second lesson was about rememberin numbers. You give every number a word. Like 1 is a subway an 2 is a man an 3 is a ringer an 4 is a beard. Now suppose you wanted to remember 2143. Of course nobody could. What I remember is an old man in the subway got his beard caught in a ringer.

I could hardly wait to get to the office to try it out. I got thinking about it so hard on the street car I rode past an was half an hour late. Uncle Charlie ast me why Id gone out to lunch so early. I didnt say nothin. I was thinkin about that fello

in Kokomoko, Oklo. what kicked out his boss an ran the bisnis himself.

The first fello that came in I went up to an says "Whats your name?" He says "None of your bisnis." Its hard to run a sistem if fellos wont be agreeable. The next one was better. He said his name was Bradbury. That floored me for a minit. He was for rushin right in. I got him by the sleeve tho till I could look him over. I figgered he had a head like a tack an a face like an undertaker. Tack, brad, undertaker, bury. Nobody could forget that. Most fellos has no pashance tho. He says "Whats wrong, young fello? Do you think Im Charlie Ross or somebody?"

He didnt come back for almost a week. Then one day I saw him come in. I grabbed him before he could get thru an says "Just a minit. Hold your horses." That gave me a chance to look at his face. The only trouble was it didnt remind me of anything but a tomato. Then it came over me sudden. I says "Walrus, artik, brr—ice, Brice." You cant prove anything on a fello like that tho. He has no control He walked in an told Uncle Charlie the heat had got one of the fellos in the office.

Pretty soon Uncle Charlie stuck his head out an says to get Wimbledings telephone number.

Right away I says "I know it. Its bananas an cabage make elefunt pudding." I might have known Uncle Charlie was to old to start any modern stuff with. He wanted to know if Id ever been shell shocked. I tried to explain but he wouldnt lissen. Wanted to knock of work an take me to the doctor. Said he owed it to the family. Thats the way they used to burn fellos for witches in old times when theyd invent an alarm clock or something.

I got to quit pretty soon on account of my fountin pen. It cant seem to control itself. It wont rite at all for a while. Then a couple of pages will roll out of it all in one place. The fello that sold it said it was a self filler. I laid it by the ink bottle for a couple of days but of course nothin happened. It gets emoshunal in my vest pocket. Its more like a self emtier.

Well Mable, its five oclock. Time to quit work. Everybodies goin.

yours till the next time  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

I havnt rote you lately cause I had an ear acke. I was scared I might give it to you. I think

Angus hurt one of my ear drums. He snores louder than an old tractor. He wont beleeve that. Says hes laid in bed nihts lisinin and never heard a sound. Theres two things nobody wont believe about themselves. One is they havnt got a sense of umor an the other that they snore.

Ears, Mable, is a rich mans plesure. A fello could get married cheeper than have an ear acke. When Uncle Charlie heard about mine he made me go an see his family docter again. I told him I didnt have no family. He said Id better go anyway. Uncle Charlie is all for preparedness. The docter looked at my ears. He acted like he was surprised to find em there. Then he ast me if I ever had any trubble with my stummick. I says no an my feet was in good shape to. I was sorry to disapoint him but there was nothin the matter with me but my ear. Then he decided Id have to go to an ear speshulist. He had a friend that was a dandy. He only charged me \$5 dollars for callin him up.

The ear fello must have thought my head was bilt like an old corn cob pipe. He tried to run pipe cleaners thru my brain. I guess he was one of those fellos that let things go in one ear an out the other. He says I had bad ears. I told him he didnt need to talk. His own wasnt no perly pink shells.

This fello said Id have to go down to an xray friend of his. Hed take some picturs of my ears. Right away I saw where I could save him trubble. I could give him one of those foygrafts that I had taken of me in an overseers cap. They dont seem to show much else but ears. He was set on my goin to see his friend tho. He only charged me \$10 dollars for given me his adress. My ear hadnt hurt much when I went in. That fello knew his bisnis tho. He worked me up into a good case.

The first thing I ast the xray fello was if he had any friends. He said he didnt know a sole. So I let him go ahead an take my picturs. I thought you might like one not havin any of me without any uniform on. I says Id like to have one of me standin up full length an one of my bust sort of thinkin. He was one of those smart Alexes tho that you couldnt tell nothin. I wouldnt have let him into the tin typers union on what he knew about takin picturs. He tried to take a flash light. The thing went of so close to my face it pretty near blinded me an raised a blister on my neck.

I waited to see the picturs. Then I did get sore. They didnt look any more like me than your father does. They didnt look like nobody. Just a blob. I told him he ought to call it a foggy

night in the woods. If he thought I was goin to order any of those he had another guess comin. He ses I didnt need to. It was the ear docter that wanted one. I couldnt figger why he should. Hed never seen me but once. I told him to send him enuff to paper his office tho for all I cared.

I got so mad I just walked out. Id spent most of the day an all my money an my ear hurt worse than ever. They was all so keen to get their friends in on a good thing theyd forgot all about it. The xray fello came runnin after me an says that will be \$25 dollars please. Its lucky he was an old man. I didnt say nothin. Just ast him if I looked like I come from a small town or something. Then I got in the elevator an went away. I could hear him talkin down the elevator shaft at me. I guess he was apologizin. He saw hed tackled the wrong fello.

I knew right away, Mable, that I couldnt afford to have an ear acke. So I painted it with iodine an went to bed. I was tellin Angus how much a fellos ears could run up to. We figged youd have to be a bank president to have a stum-mick acke. An a fello would have to be Rockfeller if he wanted to acke all over. Angus says he guessed the best way to get on in this world was to keep well. I says "Yes, well away from the docters." Eh, Mable? Angus thought if

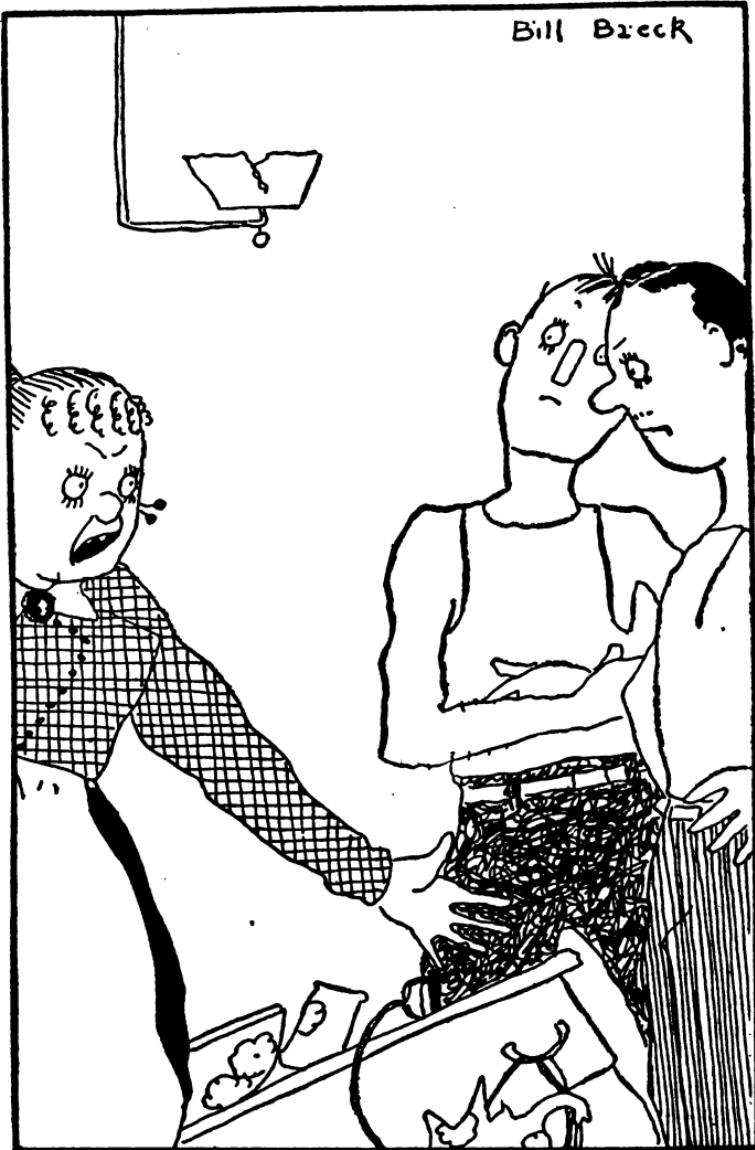
a fello could dijest three meals a day he didnt have much to worry about. Thats right of course. All you got to worry about is gettin the three meals to dijest.

Me an Angus is livin in a boardin house. We got a landlady named Mrs. Bodega. She sort of looks that way to. She gets sore at the least little thing. Youd think shed ast us here for a house party or something. We dont say nothin tho cause we like the place. Our room has a windo that looks into the back yard. Theres a tree in it the cats use for a club house. Its handy to throw things out. A fello needs a place like that for the pins an buttons in your clean shirts. These lawndry fellos dont seem to want you to use a shirt again after its washed. I dont see why they dont glue them together. I have to get up half an hour earlier when I want to put a clean one on. Then I always forget one pin till I sit down.

I guess I better quit now. Uncle Charlie told me to call up a fello for him before 3 oclock. Its almost 5 now. It dont pay to keep fellos waitin in bisnis. It might be important.

yours till I rite again  
*Bill*

Bill Breck



**"SHE GETS SORE AT THE LEAST LITTLE THING"**

*Dere Mable:*

Excuse me ritin you in bed but I hurt to much to get up. You might know Id be laid up Sunday when I dont have to go to work anyway. The whole troubel is I went to an amusment park last night. They amused me so darn well Ill never be the same again.

Abagail Finch called me on the fone the other day. He said he was in town on bisnis an wanted to have some fun. So we called up a couple of girls we knew an went down to Paradice Park. The girls wanted to see everything in the place before they went home. After countin my money I hoped they meant from the outside. I hate to disapoint a girl. Speshully if I dont know her well.

There was a fello with a megafone an a check suit standin in front of the 1st place we came to. I never saw a fello holler so. He had to drownd out his suit. He kept screamin "Come on. Come on. Step right up. A dime. One ten cent piece. Two nickles. A couple of jitneys." He could explain what a dime was better than any fello I ever heard.

The girls said that sounded interestin.

So we went in an down a hall with looking glasses on both sides. They was tricky like the

Bill Breck



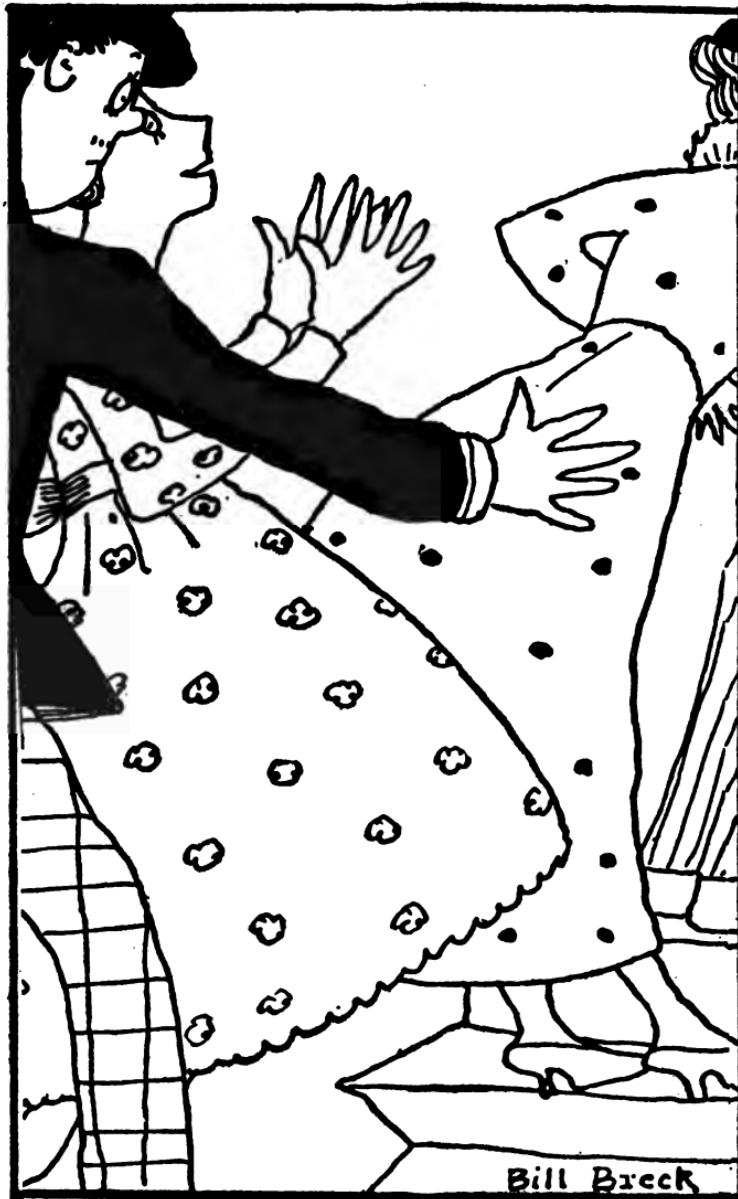
"I NEVER SAW A FELLO HOLLER SO"

tin ones the red cross used to give away. After wed went around a dozen corners without gettin anywhere I lost the girls an walked right into a lookin glass without seein it. I like to have broke my nose. They ought to know better than to leave a thing like that in the way without hangin a notice on it.

I commenced walkin round an round without comin out anywhere. There wasnt a sign or nothig to help a fello. At last I came to a place where theyd run out of lookin glasses an used chicken wire. I could look through an see a door. So I took my knife an cut my way out. I guess I might have starved to death in there only for havin my knife.

Ab and the girls came out pretty soon. Theyd got lost to an run into lookin glasses an tore their close on chicken wire. They thought it was the best fun they ever had. You didnt get knocked around as much in lots of places where they charged more.

We found a shanty where some fellos were tryin to throw curtin rings over cains. Abagail told me if you got a ring over a cane it was yours to keep free. After lookin the canes over that didnt make me want to very much. Ab bought a lot of rings from a cross eyed lady in a green sweter. She had a good bisnis head tho. As



"THE FRONT STEPS WAS SHAKIN LIKE A JELLY IN A DININ CAR"

fast as he missed the canes she picked up the rings an sold em to him over again. I couldnt make him see that hed bought em once an they was his.

He kept gettin exciteder and exciteder. Said he was goin to get a cane if it cost him his last cent. I hoped hed get one before that cause I knew what it would mean for me. He rang one at last about the size of a knittin needle. He said it might not be very big but considerin the fun hed had it was a good buy at a dollar 80.

We ate in a place that said Shore Diner, So and So Much. I never knew you could find so many things on the shore, an all fish. I was kind of glad on account of its bein brain food. I hoped if the girls ate enuff they might want to go home after supper.

I guess they was fish proof tho. As soon as they got up from the table they was for hurryin sos theyd have time to go into everything. The first place we came to was called the "House of Mirth." I had an idear how funny it was goin to be cause the front steps was shakin like a jelly in a dinin car. I never saw a place built so loose. It was full of stairs that folded up when you stepped on em an floors that turned upside down on you. The girls said it was perfectly lovely. They didnt look it when they got through.

As we was walkin away Ab slipped on a ban-

nanna peel or something that was lyin on the side-walk. He sez it was an outrage to leave a thing like that around. A fello was liable to fall on it and hurt himself.

Those girls was worse than a taxicab. Every time they turned around it cost a dime. After I thought wed been in everything Abagail says hed seen a place where we could have our fotos taken while we waited. Hed spent all his money by this time. It just seemed to make him more generus tho. They all went in an left me outside to buy the tickets. When I stepped inside I had an awful start. Abagail and the girls was standin in an airship under a big light waitin for the fotograf man. All three of them was the color of creamed spinach. I could tell in a minit they was pretty sick. It was no more then youd expect.

There was a glass of water lyin on the table. I grabbed it an tried to make one of the girls drink it. Those girls wouldnt admit they was sick if they was bein measured for a wooden kimona tho. They got mad an said not to be so fresh. I decided they could spend the rest of their lives dyin in the airship before Id raise a finger to help em.

We came back in the trolley. Of course we had to stand all the way. Abagail sez it was a darn shame to let girls be pushed around like that.

I cant understand some people. The only difference between fun an sufferin to them is if you pay for it its fun an if you dont its sufferin. I dont see why Abagail dont give somebody a quarter to drag him up an down the road behind their auto. It would make him awful happy.

yours painfully  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Its so hot the ink in my fountin pen is all loose. I have to write fast or it all flops out in one place. If anybody ever talks about the dry July of 1919 Ill know they didnt spend it here. I feel like Id just fell into a barel of glue.

Im all tired today anyway. I been tryin to work but my brains out of order somehow. So I thought Id right you a letter. Ernie Bope took me out to his place in the superbis last night. He said a night in the country would make a different man of me. It did.

Ernies the head book keeper but I always tell him he ought to have been a fire man. I never saw a fello always in such a hurry. He says hes been exactly two days behind in his work now for

Bill Breck



**"HE SAID A NIGHT IN THE COUNTRY WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENT  
MAN OF ME"**

the last 10 years. He doesnt expect hell ever catch up. I never thought much about his bein human till one day he showed me a pictur of his baby. He ast if I ever saw a kid like that before. I told him I never had.

That pleased him so that we go out to lunch now every day an he tells me all the babys said the day before. The best part is it cant talk much yet. Its goin to be awful later on. He always has a couple of new fotografis of it stuck in with a lot of bills someplace.

Ernie communes every day. Next to his baby he thinks theres nothin like the country. It sounds like an advertisement for a summer hotel. Hed been after me to come out an see the baby so long I decided to go last night before it began growin whiskers.

Hed always told me his place was less than an hour out of town. 58 minutes to be exact. We started by ridin  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour on the subway to the stashun. Ernie says that didnt count cause everybody had to ride on the subway whether they lived in the country or not. When we got out he said we only had a minit an  $\frac{1}{2}$  to make the train. Wed have to hurry right along. Askin anybody to hurry thru that crowd was like tellin a fello with a piano on his back to skip upstairs with it. When you see Ernie workin over that big book

of his, tho, youd never think he had so much fight in him.

I never did know how we made the train. After wed come to a little Ernie said you could see what a good chance this gave a fello to read his newspaper. The only troubel was that wed been in such a hurry we hadnt had time to buy one. Ernie says you couldnt blame that on communin tho. That was Uncle Charlies falt for not lettin us out sooner.

We sat there till I got scared he might be startin on his summer vacashun by mistake. He says no. It was only 58 minits ride really but this train was never on time. That was his falt tho for not takin another train. It wasnt fair to say his house was any further away. Besides he sometimes hardly had time to finish his paper as it was.

We got off at a place called Elumview. There was more view than elums. He was awful sorry for my sake he didnt have an auto at the stashun to meet us. Personaly he says he was glad he didnt own one. It was just a step an it gave him an apetite for dinner. Before I got half way I decided Id never go for a real walk with Ernie.

We got the baby out right away an he took some new picturs of it. Mrs. Ernie was all upset. She says it had lost a couple of ounces that day. I told her not to worry cause when he was

older an began communing hed lose a couple of pounds every day. Then Ernie took me around to his vegatabel garden. He says he expected to save a lot of money on it after it got goin. It struck me pretty well gone then. He explained that was because hed tried to keep chickens an vegatabels too. I ast him why they wouldnt go together. He says they did. That was the troubel. The chickens ate all the vegatabels an then went an got run over by autymobiles. You cant expect a chicken to show any gratitud tho.

All the time we was eatin supper he kept praisin the country air. After supper he says he was goin to develop some picturs of the baby. I could come up if I wanted. Hed fixed up a dark room in the hall closet. It was a little stuffy on hot nights but it was awful dark an that was the main thing. After Id sat in there half an hour the country air got to much for me an I went to sleep.

Before I went to bed Mrs. Bope says I better go over the walls pretty careful. The muskeytoes usuly sat on em till you turned the light out. I went all over em with the heel of my shoe but I guess they must have been hidin behind the picturs. I got to sleep at last by tuckin the close over my head an dremt I was locked up in the dark room.



**"I WENT ALL OVER EM WITH THE HEEL OF MY SHOE"**

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It didnt seem Id been in bed more than an hour when Ernie called me. He says wed have to step right along. The train left in 35 minits. We ran most of the way to the stashun. Ernie said it set him up all day to get a little exercise in the mornin. That fello would think he was lucky if he had the mumps on Crismus.

I been figgerin Ernies 58 minits to his house. Countin the subway, an catchin the train, an the train bein always late an 15 run from the stashun to his house it sounded more to me like an hour an  $\frac{3}{4}$ . I wish hed make out the payrolls the way he figgers how far he is from home.

Im sort of glad I live in the city. The countrys all right for farmers an long distance runners. A fello ought to be built for it tho. Im not strong enuff. Im sorry to hear your father aint takin the hot weather good an your granmothers visitin you. It does seem like everything comes at once.

Yours in spite of all

*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

If I havnt been givin the postman a back acke lately dont blame it on Uncle Charlie. Hes got to

much bisnis for me to handel. You cant burn your candel an eat it to as the poets say. Things get so busy somedays a fello dont even have a chance to write a post card let alone a letter. He really hasnt time to go out for lunch.

Then besides I been busy havin troubel with my teeth lately. I guess the hot weather got em soft. I told Uncle Charlie about it. He says perhaps the best thing was to go an see a dentist. Hes a pretty shrood fello, Uncle Charlie, when he puts his mind to it.

There was one thing I liked about the man I went to. He didnt try to fool you. While I was waitin for my turn they let me sit right outside his door lisnen to him choke em inside. It seemed like he wanted you to know what you were gettin into. I suppose it was so you woudnt to have any comeback. After Id sat there  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour I felt there woudnt be any for me if I ever got out.

The dentist collected old maggyzines. He had about 50 that must have been left him by his father. There was a lot of people sittin around readin. They acted like they thought nothin was goin to happen.

I picked up one to see if I could get that way. It was called the Orthopedik Review. It looked like a good thing to try when you couldnt go to sleep. Then I came across a story about how men

was always goin to be sick till they quit walkin on their hind legs. The fello says as soon as we started goin on all fours wed notice the difference right away. That struck me as pretty resonabel.

I got so interested I forgot I had any teeth. Just when I was in the best part of it tho the dentists dawter popped out from behind a skreen. She says if Id come with her I could see the dentist now. It sounded like an undertaker askin you in to look at the body.

Theres no use talkin about what went on after that. Theres unhappiness enuff in the world now. It was the first time I felt homesick for the war. He told me to come back next day. It seemed foolish when I knew just what was goin to happen. The only thing that made me was that story. When I went back an old lady was readin it in the corner. There wasnt nothin else to do but start another. They wouldnt let me alone, tho. As soon as I got interested the dentists dawter came an dragged me away.

All the next day I kept thinkin about the stories an wonderin how they came out. I went to the dentists a little early sos to be sure an finish em. When I got there an old man had one an a little girl the other. They was just lookin at the picturs but of course I couldnt take em away. So I started a third one.



**"AS SOON AS WE STARTED GOIN ON ALL FOURS WED NOTICE THE  
DIFERENCE"**

Well, Mable, that thing kept up for 5 days. Every day Id have to start a new story an theyd never let me get to the end. I got so I couldnt sleep nights wonderin about em.

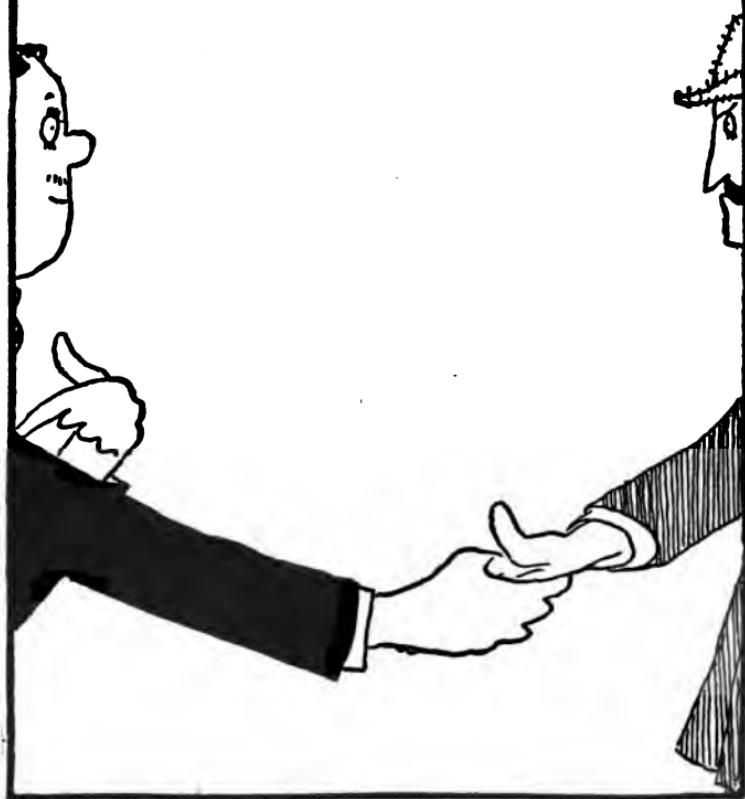
Then the dentist said hed finished me. He near had but I didnt know he knew it. So now I got to go thru life without knowin how they ended. My only hope is that my teeth may go back on me again. When a fello goes to a dentist he ought to be assigned a maggyzine an that ought to be his till they got thru mawlin him.

While I been writin this a funny thing happened. I saw somebody come in but I didnt pay no atenshun. If you dont keep em waitin they think your not busy an go somewheres else. He says "Is Mr. Smith in?" I sez "Which Mr. Smith do you mean? Theres me an Uncle Charlie." Then I looked up an it was nobody else but my old Captin. I was so surprised I started to salute him. I just remembered in time an changed it to scratchin my head.

He didnt seem to know me. So I says "My names Smith you know. Me an you used to be in the same battery together." That didnt seem to excite him. So I shook hands just to let him know the war was over.

He wanted to see Uncle Charlie. When I ast him what for he says "Private bisnis." I told

Bill Breen



**"SO I SHOOK HANDS JUST TO LET HIM KNOW THE WAR WAS OVER"**

44        "AS YOU WERE, BILL!"

him me an Uncle Charlie didnt have no secrets. Hed better tell me. Then Id try an fix it up with Uncle Charlie for old times sake. It was like makin faces at a bull dog that you know is chained but your not sure how well.

The Captin says as I seemed to be runnin the outfit that he wanted to see Uncle Charlie about a posishun. I told him right away I didnt think it was much use. There wasnt room for nobody else in my department. (Which was true.) I couldnt think of anything else that he could do.

Just to please him I telephoned Uncle Charlie there was a young fello out here lookin for a job. He says did I think he was an imploymint agency. Turn him over to the head clerk. So I told the Captin to go an see the head clerk. That got him awful sore. He told me to go an see somebody else. I couldnt catch the name he slammed the door so loud. Once a Captin always a Captin I guess. That was one of the things, tho, that made the war worth while to a fello.

(Im glad the president is goin to reduce the cost of high livin.) Then I can come up to Philopolis some week end over Sunday. I certinly would like to see some green trees agen. The only thing thats green around here is the office boy.

Yours till I give the Captin a job

*Bill*

P.S. Uncle Charlie just came in an ast hadnt Mr. Gunlock been there. Thats the Captins name. It was so near 5 tho I didnt stop to tell him. I wanted to be sure an get this finished. Else Id have to take it home. I dont believe in takin work home for the evenin.

*Dere Mable:*

I certinly am learnin a lot of things besides ex an importin. Uncle Charlie called me in his office Saturday an says he thought he was gettin a little stout. He acted surprised. I guess he dont shave himself. He wanted me to go out to the club an shoot some golf with him. I told him Id never played but I thought I could get away with it. I used to play a fair game of bilyards

We went out after lunch. Uncle Charlie was all dressed up in a little boys suit. He gave me a foldin canvas umbrela rack filled with about 20 golf sticks. Somebody must have been playin with em in a stone kwarrie. They was all twisted out of shape on the end. I couldnt see any use in luggin them all. I says Id just pick out one an trust to luck. He wouldnt leave any of em tho.

There was a couple of little kids about 9 years old standing outside the door. Uncle Charlie

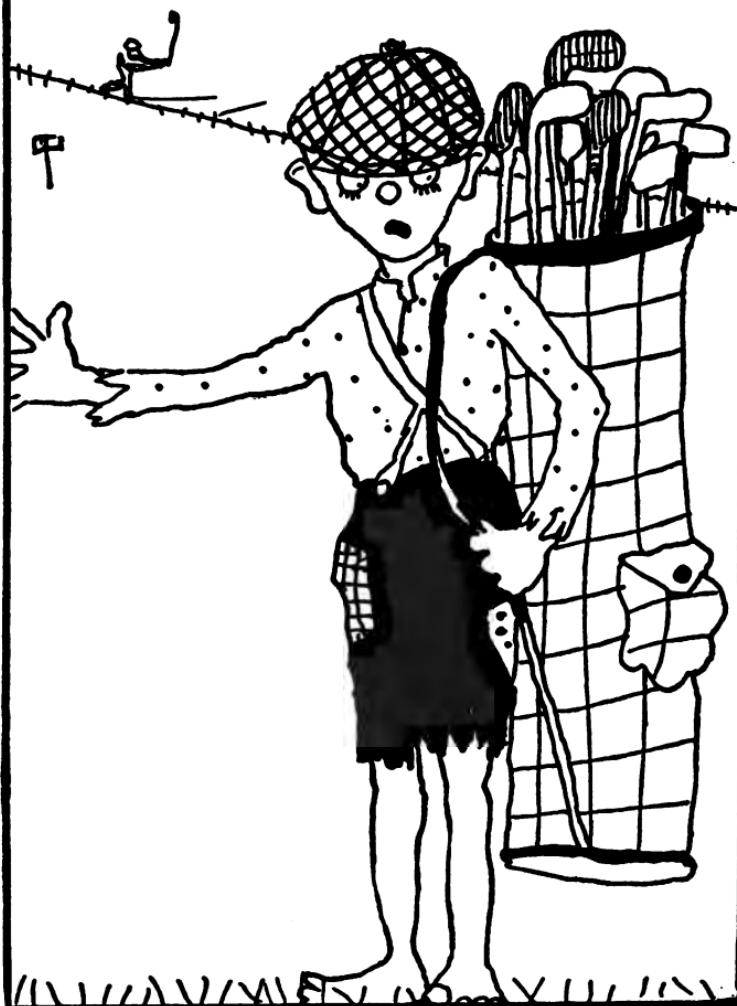
gave my golf case to one. He might have crawled into it without crowdin the clubs. It looked like bullyin to me. I says I wasnt a crippel. Id carried a pack in France that made this feel like a toy balloon. He insisted on the kids to help watch our balls. I didnt expect mine to go far enuff to need a relay to follow em. It wasnt my party tho.

We walked out to a little platform in the middle of a field. Uncle Charlie went first so I could watch him an get the hang of it. He was so careful of his ball he wouldnt put it on the ground. He made a sand pie an set it on that like a egg. Then he hawled of an gave it an awful swat. It didnt seem resonabel to be so scared of gettin your ball dirty an then hit it with a stick as hard as you could. I laid mine right on the platform. Uncle Charlie told me to hold on a minit. Hed fix my tea for me. I thanked him an says Id rather wait till I got back to the club an have a lemonade.

Uncle Charlies ball went a mile. I had no idear he was so strong. I saw Id have to give it an awful walop to catch up. Just as I got all ready to hit it he stopped me an says one of the main things was to keep both feet on the ground. He must have thought I stood like a pelikan or something.

It got me so rateled, I missed the ball. I

Bill Bireck



"HE MIGHT HAVE CRAWLED INTO IT WITHOUT CROWDIN  
THE CLUBS"

thought maybe my club was to short an tried another. That was to long. It came down like a pile driver an like to have knocked a corner of the platform. Uncle Charlie got all worked up about it. He says Id busted one of his friends clubs. Youd have thought hed have been glad it wasnt his. Some fellos has no gratitude tho. I began to see why you had to carry so many.

Well, I worried the ball along somehow till it rolled into a place where theyd been diggin a ditch right in the middle of the linx. When I went to pick it out Uncle Charlie started makin rules. He said I had to knock it out of where it was without touchin it. I didnt touch it but I didnt knock it out ether. After Id made kindlin of another stick he says hed rather break a couple of rules than all the clubs. So he let me put it back on the grass.

We walked till we came to a round place with a flag stuck in a hole in the middle. I could see Uncle Charlie was gettin tired. He hardly hit the ball at all. It just rolled along the ground right for the flag. Then that smart Alex of a kid pulled the flag out an the ball dropd in the hole.

I thought I had him then. I ast how he was goin to knock it out of that place without touchin it. He says he was allowed to pick it out of there cause the hole was finished. I couldnt see

how that had anything to do with it. How could he prove the hole I got in back there wasnt finished to. There wasnt nobody workin on it. Of course a fello can beat you if he makes up rules as he goes along.

The more I played the madder I got. If Willard had played golf a couple of hours before he had his fight hed still be champeen. I couldnt figger it out. You can take one of those sticks an cut the head of a weed slick as a whissel. The minit you put a ball down, tho, nothin behaves. That linx looked like a creepin barage had gone over it when I got thru.

Uncle Charlie told me when he started out it was only a 9 hole course. I guess he never counted em. I went into about 20 the first mile out. I was gettin pretty sick of it when an old fello with a beard came up an ast if he could go thru us. I wasnt goin to let him without a fight. Not that I had anything worth takin. Its the principal of the thing. Uncle Charlie explained how he just wanted to go past. I couldnt see any sense in askin that when he had about 40 acres to do it.

He was so old I didnt think hed be able to hit the ball off the platform. He knocked it clear out of sight, tho. Uncle Charlie says he was the best player an the worst grouch in the club. I was for

racin him to the next flag. But he says no wed have to wait till he got far enuff away sos we couldnt hit him. Nobody wants to get any sport out of golf at all.

I waited till he got what I figgered was about 7 shots away. Then I took a good brace an let her have it. That old methuzalum had made me mad. I wouldnt have been surprised to see somebody come along on crutches an knock the ball about 10 times as far as I could.

I knew Id hit it but I couldnt see where. That was because I was lookin right around the platform where it usuly was. Then I heard Uncle Charlie say "Lord what a drive. Right down the course. Gee your goin to hit old Dunwiddie." Just then the old boy began jumpin up an down like hed sat on a bee hive.

Uncle Charlie got sore. I thought first it was because my best shot had been spoiled. I found he was sore at me tho. He says wed have to quit now an get out before Dunwiddie had time to go back to the club an complain. Id ruined him round there.

He cheered up when he got back to the club an found hed lost a quarter of a pound. We went into town an had a 5 pound dinner to celebrate it. I guess Ill quit now. The tiperiters out here make such a noise tellin what they did Sunday I

Bill Breck



"AST IF HE COULD GO THRU US"

cant do any work. I wish Uncle Charlie would move me to a quieter place where I could concentrate.

yours intensively  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Im in strong with Uncle Charlie. I just made him win a big golf match. He called me in his office Friday an ast me to carry his sticks in a turnymint next day. The cadys made him nervus. They couldnt do anything but laff.

He explained how a whole bunch was goin to play an the best 16 played some other club in a couple of weeks. Hed been tryin to get in the 1st 16 for 7 years. He thought the chances was extra good this year on account of so much sickness.

So I went out to the club with him the next afternoon. There was a lot of fellos standing round watchin the players start off. Pretty soon it came Uncle Charlies turn. I dont know who the crowd wasbettin on but it sure wasnt him. They just stood there like a flock of clams while he made his mud pie under the ball. It seemed sort of a shame not to have anybody rootin for him. So when he got ready to shoot I yelled, "Sock it to

em, Uncle Charlie. You got the stuff. Right in the eye." I wasnt so sure about it. I didnt have no money on the game, tho, an I thought it might cheer him up.

I heard somebody say "Keep quiet. Whats the matter with you?" That made me sore. I lay down the sticks an was just thinkin up something sharp to say back when Uncle Charlie butted in. He says "For heven sake, shut up." Whoever it was saw he was in Duch an kep quiet. I let it drop to. I thought it might make Uncle Charlie nervus to have an argumint while he was getin his first swat.

He took an awful swing. The ball went a good way but it was all up an down. After it had gone up in the air a ways it turned off sharp to the left like it had just remembered something an lit in some long grass a little way from the platform. He had an awful time gettin out there. His idear seemed to be to mow down the grass all around the ball with his stick before he knocked the ball out. Hed lop of a feed of hay. Then hed stop an say things that would have put a mule team into a gallop.

He got out at last an started down the field. He acted something like a boat. First hed tack over to a place where theyd been excavatin an roll in. Hed get out of there an tack back to an-

other hole on the other side. I ast him if this was like pocket pool where you made a point every time you put your ball in a hole. I couldnt hear just what he said. Somehow I dont think it was.

After a while we came to one of those round places with a flag in the middle. A lot of fellos was tryin to roll their ball in the little hole where the flag belonged. Uncle Charlie thought that was where he might catch up a little. He sez if any of those fellos muffed it hed be right on their heels.

I took the hint an waited till one of them was all ready to hit the ball. Then I yelled "Yaw," just as loud as I could. He jumped a mile an missed the hole. Then he ast "Who is this cady?" Uncle Charlie explained I wasnt a regular cady. I was his nefphew. The fello says hed better teach me something about the game an good manners if he wanted to keep me in the family any longer. I could see Uncle Charlie was sore. I dont blame him. If they could see what a pitchers got to put up with they wouldnt be so fusy.

I found after, tho, that he was mad at me an not the fello that was putterin. That disgusted me. I decided not to raise a finger to help him if he fell in the hole himself insted of the ball.

The only thing that improved in Uncle Charlie

Bill Bieck



**"SOCK IT TO EM, UNCLE CHARLIE!"**

was his languige. Its lucky he had a good open place to talk in. We played about 2 miles further when a fello came along an told him if he could keep from breakin his leg for  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile hed be one of the 1st 16. He says old man Munn had had to quit with a touch of the sun. Old man Fotheringill an Dilwhopper had drove all their balls in the river an gone home mad. There was only 16 left in the turnymint.

Everything was goin nice till we came to a river. It looked like the end of the game to me. Uncle Charlie fixed his ball up on the platform, tho. There was nothin but a little footbrige across the river. The worlds champeen bowler couldnt have rolled a ball over it let lone Uncle Charlie with a stick.

He says he had to knock it clean over the river to get to the next hole. I didnt want to discourage him but I couldnt see why hed be able to hit it further than he ever had just because there was a river there. Then he started battin balls in the water one after the other. As fast as they fell in theyd float out of sight around the bend.

At last he sat down on the edge of the platform all discouraged. He guessed hed lost the turnymint. There was a rule that after a fello had tried 10 times to get across he was out of the game. He just had one ball left. He had as

much chance of knockin that under the river as over it.

Things sure looked bad. Right there, tho, was where I started makin my success in bisnis. I ast him if it made any difference how many shots it took him to get to the first flag. He says no. All he had to do was use the same ball. What good did that do him tho when he couldnt get across the river. I says not to worry. Just to wait.

Then I walked down to where I saw a rowboat. I brought it back an sat in it right under the platform Uncle Charlie was workin from. I told him to hit an run for the boat. Id take care of the rest.

Uncle Charlie seemed to get the idear right away. He batted the ball into the river an then like to have upset the boat gettin in it. We caught the ball all right. Then he stood up an began knockin it across the river a couple of feet at a time. He sounded like a fello tryin to put himself to sleep. All you could here was "51." Swat. "52." Swat. "53." Swat.

If anybody thinks its easy to keep a rowboat right side up while a fello with Uncle Charlies bild is playin golf in it he wants to try. But we got across.

Then all we had to do was put it in the little flag hole. Everybody was shakin hands with

Uncle Charlie for gettin in the first 16. They says hed made a rekord for the 18th hole besides by doin it in 192 shots. Nobodyd ever taken that many before for the whole linx.

It just shows what a fello can do, Mable, by keepin his head around him. Uncle Charlie told me Monday he liked the way I was takin hold of the bisnis. He thought hed have to raise me before long. If you want to get ahed in the world you got to please somebody. It dont make much difference how. I guess it wont be long before he takes me in as a pardner.

yours till then

*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

I always thought wimmin was the only ones that had troubel buyin close. That was till I bought a hat. An now I bought it Im no further than I was. As soon as I got home an looked in the glass I went out an had the old straw one cleaned. I expect to wear it the rest of the winter.

I couldnt see anything the matter with the straw in the first place. Uncle Charlie says, bein my Uncle it looked bad for him to have me goin round with an old plug like that. Of course the

brim was a little undecided. But you cant expect a fello to wear a high hat down to work.

At last it got caught in a rain storm. Uncle Charlie said he couldnt tell from the back whether I was wearin a sun bonnet or a panama. So he gave me some money for a new one. I dropt in the hat store on the way home Saturday.

The fello ast me what kind of a hat I wanted. I hadnt thought of that. I just came in to buy a hat. He told me to wait a minit an hed bring me the latest stiles. He came back with a pile of caps that would make a Skotch band look like a funeral. Accordin to him they was the smartest hats they had. I says I wasnt buyin a hat to learn tricks or nothin. Id put the brains into it myself. Youd hardly believe it but he didnt crack a smile. Of course if hed had sense enuff to see a joke like that he wouldnt have tried to sell me such a cap. I tried on about a dozen. They made me look to much like the collar ads tho.

Just then a fello came in with a derby. He looked so neat I decided to get one of those. The hat man says you could never go wrong in a derby. But I told him about old Ezra Peterboro. How he wore a brown one all his life an hes in jail now.

None of the derbies seemed to have been bilt for middle sized men. They ether fell down over

my head till they caught on my ears or sat on top of it like a monkey. I found one at last that fitted in places. The hat fello sez hed have to shape it up a bit for me.

I was standin in one of those lookin glasses that you rap round you tryin to decide wether I needed a hair cut or not. The next thing I knew the hat man had jammed a tiperiter down over my head. Now Ill stand a certin amount of foolin. But not from a fello I never seen before. I grabbed the tiperiter off an told him he was lucky I didnt bust it over his head. I dont think hed have noticed if youd busted a victrola over it. He pulled a paper out of the tiperiter. It had a map of somebodies foot on it. He ses that was my shape. I told him hed got me mixed up. I wanted a hat not a pair of shoes.

He took the derby an went down in the seller. I got lookin at picturs of fellos standin round somebodies front yard in derbies. The more I saw of em the surer I got I didnt want to look like that.

While I was worryin a fello came in with a cane an a brown soft hat. It made him look like hed just bought the New York Central. I knew that was what I wanted. So when the clerk came back with the derby I told him Id changed my mind. He seemed kind of sad like hed set his heart on

Bill Baeck



"NONE OF THE DERBIES SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN BILT FOR MIDDLE  
SIZED MEN"

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gettin rid of it. He wanted to know if Id like a Fedora. I told him no I didnt smoke cigars. I saw he was tryin to bribe me to take the derby.

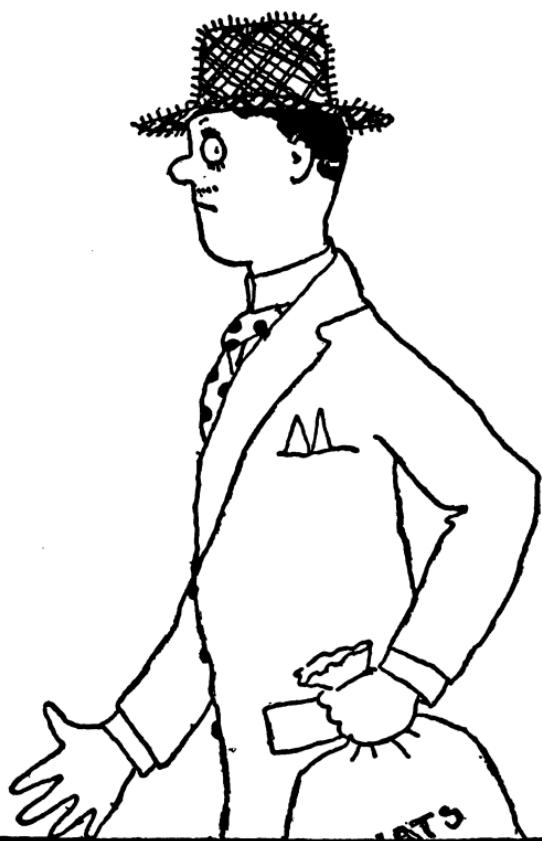
This time he brought enuff soft hats to fit out the whole Bulshevikky army. I never knew there was so many kinds. I tried em all on but somehow I couldnt get lookin like the fello in the cane. After Id gone thru the whole lot it struck me a cap might be the best thing after all. So I put on all the caps again.

I never saw a fello who seemed so fond of hats as the clerk. He thought every one I tried was the best one hed ever seen. At last I picked out a kind of a bay soft hat with a few days growth of beard. As soon as I said Id take it I began to think I didnt like it. So I ast the clerk. He says he liked it best of any. Thought so from the first but didnt like to say anything. It suited my face. I took his word an bought it. He put the old straw in a paper bag.

I couldnt have felt worse if Id walked down the street in a bathin suit. I knew everybody was lookin at me. I wondered how they liked the hat. At last I saw Joe Loomis. I knew hed tell what it was like. He did. He sez "Gosh, Bill, where did you get that? Goin into the cirkus bisnis or something?"

I ast him what was the matter with it. Joe sez

Bill Barek



"A KIND OF A BAY SOFT HAT WITH A FEW DAYS GROWTH OF BEARD"

when a fello buys a hat like that it shows they aint enforcin proibishun.

I told him it wasnt new. It was just an old one I had before the war. I was tryin to wear it out. Joe says he wouldnt wear it out anywherees where the police could see me.

Of course I didnt care a rap what Joe thought. It struck me it might be a little early for soft hats tho. So I stopped in a drug store an took the old straw out. I carried the new one home in the bag. Im sleepin on it now for a few nights to make it look a little older.

I cant figger why it is as soon as I go into a store to buy something I cant tell whats good an whats not. I know when I see it on anybody else all right. In the store, tho, I bet you could sell me a white paden lether derby. Whatever it is I know its rotton as soon as I get home. Thats one nice thing about girls. No matter what a thing looks like they can say its the latest stile.

The next time you write I wish youd tell me when your birthday is. Id like to send you some little thing just to show you I remembered it.

Thoughtfully yours  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Some day if Im a milyunair Ill take you to the place I ate with Uncle Charlie last night. He had a couple of neeces visitin him from Cadaver, Oklo. They was nice girls but theyd lived there all their lives. The only thing they was bound theyd improve while they was in town was their time. Me an Angus was ast out to dinner with em cause Uncle Charlie couldnt understand what they was talkin about.

When we got to the eatin place there was a lot of people waitin around the dinin room door. Uncle Charlie told us we were in luck. Harry, the head waiter, was a great friend of his. He let us right in. He pushed through the crowd like a policeman trying to find out whos hurt. When he got to the head waiter he says "Hello Harry. Hows the boy?" The head waiter just looked at him an says "Keep back, please." Uncle Charlie pretended he was talkin to somebody at a table near the door. He told us Harry was awful busy, but wed get in in a minit.

At last they gave us a little table about the size of your mothers sewin stand. One good platter ~~there~~ there wouldnt have been room for your elbows. Whoever had been eating there before us couldnt have liked their dinner much. Theyd left most of

66        "AS YOU WERE, BILL!"

it on the table cloth. Uncle Charlie didnt seem to mind spots, tho, except when he was home. He says we was lucky to get such a nice table. Right near the music to. If wed been any nearer the fello with the long horn couldnt have stretched it out without knockin off one of the Cadaver girls hats.

I wish you could have seen em change the table cloth. They put the new one right over the dirty one without takin off a fork. It reminded me of when I was in the hospital an they changed the sheets without havin me get up. Afterwards I counted 6 table cloths. A felloed save time by changing his shirts like that an puttin the whole bunch in the wash at the end of the week.

The billy fair looked like a newspaper. I never saw so many things to eat in forin languiges. Uncle Charlie looked it over an says there wasnt anything there he liked. Granted he had any idear what was there I felt sorry for his wife. She must have had a time doin the marketin.

I couldnt make any sense out of it so I says I thought it would be nice if Uncle Charlie ordered for everybody. He told me to leave it to him. Hed pick us out a nice dinner. Only he didnt seem to have much to say about it. Every time hed order something the waiter would go around behind him an look over his shoulder like he didnt



**"THE HEAD WAITER JUST LOOKED AT HIM AND SAYS  
'KEEP BACK, PLEASE'"**

believe there was any such thing there. Then hed say "Oh no. You dont want that. You want some of that. Its very good tonight." Like it had improved since the night before. If anybody had tried to sell Uncle Charlie a different newspaper from the one he ast for hed have tipped over the newstand. The waiter had him hipnotised tho. I dont see why he didnt let the waiter order the dinner in the first place.

While we was sittin around eatin rolls the band started right in my ear. Everybody made a dive for a little bare place in the middle of the room about as big as your front hall. One of the Cadaver girls screamed something about dying to dance. So I took her out. Of course you couldnt make no headway. The place was so small youd have got dizzy if thered been nobody there. I just stood still an let the crowd shove me. She told me I shimmyd divine. I didnt tell her I wasnt dancin at all. I guess thats the way that thing started. Everybody got in such a jam they couldnt move. So they just stood still an called it a new dance.

About half an hour later a waiter came around with a big dish covered up. He took the cover off an showed us what was underneath. Like a trick fello showin you whats in the hat before he makes it disappear. Uncle Charlie says "Thats

**Bill Breck**



**"THE WAITER WOULD GO AROUND BEHIND HIM AND LOOK OVER HIS  
SHOULDER"**

fine." Then he took it away again perfectly happy.

We spent so long on dinner I was full of food yet I was hungry again. At last they brought Uncle Charlie the bill.

Ive seen him spend half an hour checkin up the expense account of some salesman. He didnt even add this up tho. Just pulled out a wad of bills an shoved them all at the waiter. A few came wanderin back on a plate. I thought hed be tickled to death to save something out of the reck. It seemed to annoy him tho. He just waved at it an says "Oh thats all right. Keep it." Its a lot easier to lose a lot of money than half a dollar.

While we was sittin there wonderin when we was goin the band started up a funny tune that didnt make any sense. It was so rotton nobody got up to dance. It looked like a good chance to have a real dance with lots of elbow room. So I ast one of the Cadaver girls.

We hadnt any more than got started when a couple of fellos with little red coats and boots that was to big around the top came runnin in. They looked like a couple of Checko Swaybacks to me. Right away they began whirlin round and round the open place. The first thing I knew they bumped into us an like to knocked us down.

I got sore. I grabbed one of them by his red

coat and says "Here. You cant pull any of that rough dancin around here." I dont know just what happened after that except I found myself out on the street with my hat on backwards. I was so mad I didnt try to go back.

I never did see the Cadaver girls again. Uncle Charlie thinks its the greatest joke he ever heard of. Thats what you get for protectin a fellos neeces. I dont like akrobatiks with my meals anyway.

Yours for the simple things

*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

I just discovered a fine thing. Its no use tryin to be helthy. You ether are or you arnt. It comes with you just like doubel joints or big knees. I hate to think of all the things I havnt done cause they might hurt me when I might have been havin a good time.

Uncle Charlies always been awful interested in his helth. No matter how busy he is hell stop to tell you whats the matter with him. He hasnt eaten anything he likes for 10 years. An the less he eats the fatter he gets. It dont seem to discourage him tho. He sez imagine what hed be like if he ate all he wanted. He told me once that

by workin as hard as he could on himself he just managed to keep in fair shape. By shape he couldnt have meant figger.

Hes got a relative that wrote a book called the "Sekruts of Helth." Uncle Charlies prouder of that than the bible. He knows most of it by heart. He told me if a fello did all the things in the book regular hed never die. His relative is over 80 an never been sick in his life. He reads four newspapers a day an lifts the back of Fords right off the ground. Id rather be an invalid, I think.

He lent me the book once. It made a short life an a gay one look good to me. About all a fello could do with himself was to take cold baths an exercise an starve to deth. There wasnt nothin left worth eatin when it got through pickin out the sure deth dishes. I can just see anybody tryin that at Mrs. Bodegas. If you says "No potatos, thanks. They got too much starch in em." Shed take it the same as if you said there was to much bluin in the milk.

Uncle Charlie told me the other day his relative was comin East to visit him. He thought bein so interested in the book Id like to come out an see him. We went out together after work that night. Uncle Charlie studied the book all the way out. We got there about an hour before the old boy.



**"ON THE BACK PLATFORM OF THE TRAIN IN HIS B V DS DOIN  
SITTIN UP EXERCISES"**

Uncle Charlie had his wife open all the windos in the house. He says air was one of the biggest things in the book. Mrs. Smith thretened to freeze to deth but he told her wed have to wear our overcoats an grin. Then he hid all the pipes and cigars. We left Mrs. Smith trying to catch things that was blowin around the house an walked down to the stashun.

It seems the relatives name was Ira Coffin. That didnt sound very helthy to me. I expected to see him on the back platform of the train in his BVDs doin sittin up exercises. We didnt see him at all first. Then an old fello all done up in mufflers came up an ast if ether of us was Mr. Smith. He said if we was he was Mr. Coffin. I wondered who he was if we wasnt.

Uncle Charlie wouldnt bring his auto down. He told Mr. Coffin he always enjoyed the walk home. It got him limbered up for his real exercise later. The old boy thought that might be all right but he was goin to take a taxi. He couldnt see killin himself when there was no need of it.

After we got home old man Coffin sat around for a few minits with his overcoat on. Then he says if Uncle Charlie didnt have no real reason for sittin in a ciclone he guessed hed shut the windos. All windos was good for was to let in light. He had all the cracks stuffed up with cotton.



**"OLD MAN COFFIN SAT AROUND FOR A FEW MINITS WITH HIS  
OVERCOAT ON"**

About happast six Uncle Charlie ast him if he wanted to go up and take a little exercise an a cold shouer before dinner. Mr. Coffin ast what in Sam Hill would he want takin exercise for. Hed got enuff bouncin around in that confounded taxi to last him a month. As for takin a cold bath he never took a hot one except when the wether was warm. He couldnt see why he should take a cold one now when he was half froze as it was.

Uncle Charlie says he didnt feel right if he missed his. We could hear the water runnin and an awful splashin upstairs. When he came down Mr. Coffin ast him how he kept his hair dry when he took a shouer. Uncle Charlie got red an says he got everything under but his head.

We had a dinner fixed up from one of the Billy Fares in the "Sekrut of Helth." We started of with string beans, then we had lima beans, then some lettuce an a lot of nuts. I began to feel like a rabbit. The old boy wanted to know had the cook left or something.

After dinner old man Coffin got fidgetier and fidgetier. Finally he ast Uncle Charlie didnt he never smoke. Uncle Charlie says not since hed read his book. The old fello says "Darn my book. Wheres the nearest drugstore?" Uncle Charlie didnt dare give him some out of the table

drawer so he had to go over to the drugstore an buy him some new cigars.

We watched him smoke em till I felt like an armless man in front of a turkey dinner. He said he didnt see how Uncle Charlie got along without tobacco. Hed used it constant for 73 years. The only thing he regretted was havin waited till he was 10 before he started in.

Bime by he ast Uncle Charlie if he didnt ever take a little something. Uncle Charlie says oh no. Likker was the most terrible thing a man could put in him. It deprest the heart. Mr. Coffin says that was to bad but if we didnt mind hed mix himself up a little tonic from some stuff he had in his bag. He didnt see why he should have to get noshuns because the rest of the family seemed to have em.

After a while the relative says if nothin was goin to start he was goin to bed. Right away Uncle Charlie began raisin himself on his tip toes an shakin his rists. Coffin ast him what in blazes did he think he was doin now. Uncle Charlie explained a fello ought to do that 15 minits every night before he went to bed. It took the blood away from his head.

That made Ira kind of sad. He says hed known him since he was a little boy. He gave promise then of bein a good sensibel man. The

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next day he left Uncle Charlies an moved in town to a hotel. He said there was more life there. Hed come down for a little fun an he couldnt be pestered with cranks. Uncle Charlie says hes been losin steadily ever since he gave up dietin.

yours helthily  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Im awful tired from not havin slept much lately. It all started with Angus readin me a spook story the other night. It told how most of the people that die have a rotton time cause they keep thinkin of things they forgot to say an they cant make any of us understand. Once in a while they find somebody that can. They call him a medium.

I says I was glad I wasnt one. From all Id heard the spooks had a lot of time on their hands. Theyd just be naggin you an botherin you all the time. Imagine havin Aunt Isabel pesterin me about catchin cold all through eternity.

Angus is the kind of a fello that cant read about any kind of a simptoim without havin it. He says he wouldnt be a bit surprised if he was a medium.

Hed been hearing awful funny noises lately. It kind of ran in his family. His granfather, Donald McMutrie that died of asma, could tell when it was goin to rain without lookin out the windo. Just had a damp feelin.

In the middle of the nite Angus woke me up an ast did I hear anything funny. I told him nothin could be funny at that hour of the nite. Besides I wasnt no night watchman. He says this wasnt a joke. If Id wake up Id hear granfather McMutrie breathin in the next room.

Well, Mable, I lissened an I could feel my hair sticking into the pillo. There was the worst gurglin an chortlin goin on on the other side of the wall you ever heard. Angus says he knew it was his granfather. Nobody else ever breathed like that. He supposed the dampness in hevin had brought on his asma again.

I told Angus if he was goin to get in a bunch of spooks for buddies wed have to get different rooms. Then I pulled the bed close an the pillo over my head an went to sleep again.

Angus wasnt himself all next day. He kept tellin me stories about granfather McMutries life. I dont see why Angus was so sure he was in hevin. The same thing happened next night. Some time after midnight granfather McMutries asma got the better of him. I felt sorry for the old man

but couldnt see what he expected to prove by botherin us. Why didnt he haunt some good docter.

Angus says that settled it. He was goin to a regular medium. The old gent might have something on his mind. There was a story that hed left a lot of money hid somewhere. Perhaps he wanted Angus to have it. If that was the troubel hed do anything in his power to set the old gentleman easy.

One of the tiperiters down at the office was a spook fan. Shed chatted with her relatives way back to the time when they hung from trees. Angus got her to give us the address of a good medium. He says shed have to be pretty good to understand granfather McMutrie cause besides bein Skotch he lisped. There wasnt many could understand him when he was alive.

The mediums house looked kind of like the one we boarded in. A colored girl showed us in the front parlor where a lot of people was sittin on the edge of chairs lookin foolish.

Madam D. Mora, the medium, was an awful blow. She was the kind of a woman that dont seem to care much for exercise. Her dress was hitched away up in front and way down behind. It made her look like a chariot in the circus.

She looked us all over then rolled her eyes up

Bill B'reck



"IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NITE ANGUS WOKE ME UP"

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the ceiling an says "The spirits is beginnin to murmur. Eliza will you collect \$2 dollars and fifty cents from everybody." We hadnt figgered on that. Angus explained how it was his Uncle that wanted to speak to him, not him to his Uncle. He wanted to know couldnt she reverse the charges some way. It seemed to be a one way sistem tho. After all it was cheap enuff considerin the distance. I had to pay more than that when I called up Philopolis on your birthday.

Madam D. Mora went around like a recruitin sargent an took down our names an addresses an bisnises an ages. Then she says if we was ready to hear the messages of the spirits to follow Eliza.

We went into a back room where they was nothin but some chairs in a row an a curtin. Eliza told us to sit down. Then Madam D. Mora popped out from behind the curtin with a white bath robe on. She sat down on the end seat an told us to hold hands. All of a sudden the lights went out.

I was pretty jumpy by that time. I heard Madam D. Mora say "Is Angus MacKenzie here?" Angus admitted he was. He didnt seem very sure about it tho. Then Madam D. Mora says "Somebodies callin you. I think its a relative. Are any of your relatives dead?" Angus says, yes, most of em. Especially his granfather



**"TOLD US TO HOLD HANDS"**

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McMutrie. Madam D. Mora says she thought this was his granfather McMutrie talkin. Then she lissened a minit. She says he was very close to us. His asma must have been better cause I couldnt hear him.

"He says not to worry about him cause hes very happy. He wants to talk to you about money." Angus got so excited he let go my hand to nudge me. "He says to hang on to what you got. Dont spend it foolish. Money is awful hard to get these days. He wishes you all the luck in the world. Is that all?" She lissened a minit. "Yes thats all."

Angus didnt say anything till we got almost home. He was thinkin all the way. I know from that how upset he was. Then he says that message hadnt sounded like granfather McMutrie. Hed never been happy, never wanted to be, an as for wishin anybody luck hed die first.

We thought it was kind of a dirty trick makin us pay five dollars an then tellin us to save our money. If that was his idear of a hevinly joke wed tell him something some day that would make the angels hide behind their harps.

I thought seein hed had his joke he might leave us be that night. Id no more than dozed of, tho, before he started up again. I thought it over for a while then got up quiet an went out in the hall.

The next door to ours was the closet where the maid keeps her brooms an things.

I turned up the hall light. Then I opened the door quick. I dont know how I ever got the nerve. Over in one corner there was a big water pipe runnin up to the ceilin. From the noise that was comin out of it granfather McMutrie was in the pipe.

I sneaked back to bed. Pretty soon I heard Angus get up an go out. Then he sneaked back. Hes never menshuned granfather McMutrie again. Mrs. Bodega had the plummer yesterday. The old boy seems to be a lot better now.

If I ever die theres one thing Im not goin to do. Im not goin to talk to my relatives after Im buried. I dont see why people get so chatty then. Most folks dont talk to em when their alive.

Yours only till death

*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Me an Uncle Charlie has been takin a bisnis trip to Boston together. He took me along for company an said I might learn something besides. I did. I learned to appresheatate stayin home. We rode up on a sleeper. As soon as we got on Uncle Charlie gave our bags to the porter and says lets

go to the club car. I told him I didnt belong. He said it didnt make any differunce, tho.

He made me smoke one of his cigars. Said it was a Corona Corona an very light. It made me feel like we used to when wed spin around on your piano stool till the seat came of. I says it was lucky it wasnt a big heavy Underwood. It might not have weighed much but it was a lot stronger than it left me.

Then he started tellin me all about the ex an import bisnis. If hed have lived before ether was invented hed have made his fortune. About an hour later he woke me up an says what did I think of it. I says quick, probably but perhaps not. A fello couldnt tell. He thought Id better go to bed an let him read the paper. I was in upper 13. He hoped I liked my birth. I told him I was to young to remember it. Uncle Charlie says queer things sometimes.

While wed been talkin somebodied camouflaged the cars. Theyd hung curtins up in front of all the seats so as you couldnt see who was in em. Id forgot just what car my bunk was in. All I had to do of course was find my bag.

I walked thru so many cars lookin for it I felt I must be pretty near back to the stashun. I kept on goin till I came to the end of the train. There was nothin to do then but start back again. At



**"A HAND SHOT OUT FROM UNDER THE BEARD"**

last I found a porter that looked like the one wed gave our bags to. He was black an had curly hair an was dressed the same. Only he was asleep an I didnt like to wake him up. There wasnt nobody around so I figgered hed probably checked my bag somewhere an got undressed in the ile. When I was ready for bed I threw my close over the top of the curtins of upper 13 an grabbed the pole. They pay fellos in circuses to do some of the things I did gettin into that upper.

I just got one leg over the pole an my chin on the edge of the bunk. I was hanging there figgerin out my next move when my close came bouncin out like a rubber ball. Then a beard popped thru the curtins almost in my eye. I was so surprised I got all tangled up in it for a minit. It says "Look here, young fello. Do you think this is a basket ball cort or something?" While I was hangin there trying to think of something funny to say back a hand shot out from under the beard. I landed on the floor among other things.

I could see right away that wasnt my birth. So I tried the next car. I went at upper 13 different this time you bet. Look before you sleep is my motto. There wasnt nobody there tho. It was fixed up like a regular bed. I dont see how the chambermaid does it. She must hang by her knees from the curtain pole or something.

Along the wall was a little hammock. I thought it might be for hot wether. I tried it but it broke right down. I guess its for wimmin travelin with a lot of children. There was a light at each end of the bunk that shined in my eyes. I couldnt figger no way of turnin them out. So I unskrewed the bulbs an dropped them into the bunk belo.

It only took a minit to go to sleep. Pretty soon I had an awful dream. I dremt an aligater stuck his head over the edge of the bunk an winked at me. I tried to stick my finger in his eye. He reached in an grabbed me by the foot. I woke up all of a nervous shake. An sure enuff something had me by the foot an pullin me. Only it was a man not an aligater. He was talkin to himself. He says "You will stick your finger in my eye, eh? You think you will, eh?" It made me kind of sore. I sassed him right back an says "Youll get into trubble in a minit." He says "Youll get out of my bunk in less than that."

His head came up over the top of the bunk. I looked over to see if he was standin on a chair or something. When I saw he wasnt I figgered Id probably made another mistake. So I says if that was his bunk why of course it must be. An there I was in the ile again. Somebody stuck his head out an sez, "Aw, shut up an quit foolin."

They wasnt anything to do but pick up my close

an go on to the next car. I figgered Id try em all an then go up an talk to the enginear. The fello that builds these cars certinly is a man of one idear. Upper 13 in the next car was all buttoned up to the neck. It looked about as invitin as the office Saturday afternoons. I had to look tho. I grabbed the pole an stepped on the arm of the seat. Just as I was goin to stick my head thru the curtins we went round a corner on to wheels. My foot slipped of the seat arm an slid into the lower bunk till it struck something soft. Youd thought Id have killed it whatever it was.

Bells began ringin down at the end of the car. People was stickin there heads out an askin what the celebreshun was. One fello grabbed me an sez "Wheres the rock?" I says I guessed she was in lower 13. Well, Mable, I could see pretty plain I hadnt found my car yet. There was no way I could help any so I decided to run along. I dont know how it all came out.

As soon as I got in the next car I saw the porter shinin Uncle Charlies shoes an heard Uncle Charlie sleepin. I wasnt goin to take no more chances on climbin into bed with strangers. So I pried him over an jammed in beside him.

He rolled over towards mornin an like to have crushed me. It skared me so I got up to dress. When I stood up my head came over the top of



**"PEOPLE WAS STICKIN THERE HEADS OUT"**

the upper bunk. There was my bag sittin there. Nobodied slept in it. The bunk, of course, not the bag. It made me so sore I just crawled up an went to bed.

I ast Uncle Charlie at breakfast how hed slept. He said not a wink. He never closed his eyes on sleepin cars.

Thats about the only important thing that happened. All Uncle Charlie wanted to do in Boston was sit around fellos offices an talk bisnis. I dont see why he came away out here to do that. Its all he does home. At last I told him I wasnt feelin good an went to a show. I figgered I might as well get something out of the trip.

I got to quit now. The office closes in half an hour. I dont want to be late.

yours promptly  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Thanksgivins over. Thats the thing Im most thankful for. Uncle Charlie ast me an Angus to his house for dinner. I had no idear eatin could be so tecknickle. He told us it was goin to be a family affair but wed better wear our evenin close. Angus ast wether he meant our pajamas. I feel sorry for Angus sometimes.

We explained to him how evenin close was queer lookin suits with a lot of buttons you never used. We rented a couple. They was a little big but that seemed the best thing. It gave you a chance to eat out to them. Gettin a dress suit is only the smallest part of it tho. Its got more ackscessories than a Ford.

In the first place you have to wear cuffs instead of collars. When we was almost dressed we found we had to have a lot of collar buttons to hold the front of the shirts together. That threw us off a mile till Angus found some of the wooden buttons that come in your shirts from the wash. We borrowed some radyater paint from Mrs. Bodegas, the landlady. It made them look like a milyun dollars. A little came off on the shirts but Angus said when the lights was on that would look like reflezshun. Then we had to have pumps. Thats a kind of a low neck shoe. Uncle Charlie lent us a couple of pairs. I understand now what Chinese wimmin go through.

He said they wasnt goin to have dinner till happast 7. We went around earlier tho in case they got hungry an wanted to start. A fello met us at the door all done up like we was. I thought he must be Uncle Charlies brother from the west hes always talkin about. He was awful shy. I had a hard time to get him to shake hands. We

told him wed heard a lot about him an hoped wed get to know each other better. He told us Mrs. Smith wasnt down yet. She was dressin. Angus sez not to hurry her on our account. Sit around a while an get acquainted. We couldnt put him easy tho. He acted like a fello thats left a cigaret burnin on a mantelpiece somewhere. Just bowed an went away.

About an hour later Uncle Charlies wife showed up. She was wearin all the profits of the ex an import bisnis for the last ten years. Then the others began to trikkle in. I cant figger why a woman takes of everything for dinner an a fello has to get into a collar that pinches his ears.

Nobody seemed to have any idear of eatin. In a few minits Uncle Charlies brother came back with a tray full of cocktails. Uncle Charlie ast us to try one of his dry martinis. It gave Angus such a start he turned around quick an spilt half them over some ladies dress. I passed it of by sayin it was lucky they was dry. Else they might have spoilt her dress. Life of the party. Thats me all over, Mable.

About midnight we went into dinner. As soon as we sat down Uncle Charlie ast me if I like oister cocktails. I sez I never drank any but Id try anything once. It seems an oister cocktail, Mable, is where they let the oisters bleed to death



**"THEY WAS A LITTLE BIG"**

in a little glass an set the bodies out around it.

Angus was just gettin interested in his soup when Uncle Charlies wife leans over an says, "Mr. MacKenzie, wont you tell us all about the war." Angus isnt called that offen. He didnt know she was talkin to him till I kicked him. Then he started in on the day he was drafted an didnt miss a day till he got discharged. Nobody paid any atenshun to him after the first month except an old lady next to him. I found after she was stone def. He was the first one that had tried to talk to her all evenin an it kind of flattered her.

I got along fine till they passed something Uncle Charlie said was hearty chokes. I took one. Angus had more sense. He sez he didnt care for flowers speshully roses. When he was a kid he used to like to chew sweet clover but that was all. I tried to cut mine up but it wouldnt cut. So I pulled it apart an hid it under my mashed potato.

I ate so much I could hear the wooden buttons creakin in my shirt. I was glad to see the finger bowls come in. Everybody set theirs to one side tho, as much as to say they wasnt through yet an expected something more. There was a glass plate underneath with a little napkin on it.

They brought ice cream in after that. I guess theyd almost forgot it. Angus was busy tellin the def lady what an awful fello his old Captin was.

He didnt see the little napkin an set his ice cream on it. Pretty soon he began tryin to cut something with his spoon. I could see he was gettin nervus. At last he rolled it round the spoon an stuck it in his mouth. He worked over it about 5 minits. Then he made an awful face an swalloed it when he thought nobody was lookin.

All of a sudden the wimmin got up an left. I thought Uncle Charlied told em a story an made em sore. I says if he gave the word Id try an get em to come back. It seemed a shame to let em go home mad. Uncle Charlie says no such luck. Wed see enuff of em before the evenin was out.

All the men began talkin bisnis right away like theyd lost a lot of time. Uncle Charlie told em there was a pool bein formed. Internashunal Steamship company was due to go down. I says right away if they owned the boat we came over on it was a wonder they hadnt long ago. That reminded Angus of the war agen. After hed talked for 15 minits on what the battery thought of the top sargent they all began goin out for matches an one thing an another. At last there wasnt nobody left but me an Uncle Charlie an Angus. He said perhaps wed better go out an see the girls.

Uncle Charlies wife ast us if we played bridge. I sez no but I knew a lot of good card tricks.

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They seemed set on bridge tho. Angus was for teachin some of the fellos how to roll the bones. He cant get away from the military for a minit.

We sat around lookin at picturs in magyzines. It got kind of hot. I began to feel the way I did once when they gave me ether. The next thing I knew Uncle Charlie was shakin me. Everybodied gone home. He says if we didnt want to come down to the office in our dress suits wed better go to.

Sosietys all right Mable, only I like to be surer what Im eatin. Those old Thanksgivin dinners back home was good enuff for me. Perhaps next year.

yours till then  
*Bill*

*'Dere 'Mable:*

I just finished havin a sprained ankel for a week at Uncle Charlies house. Thats why I didnt write you. The docter said I couldnt move around much. It might have been kind of stupid only for the water pipe in my room bustin. If I ever had a water pipe bust on me I think Id build a new house. Id save money.

I was lyin in bed the day after I hurt myself

Bill Breck



"ROLLED IT AROUND THE SPOON AN STUCK IT IN HIS MOUTH"

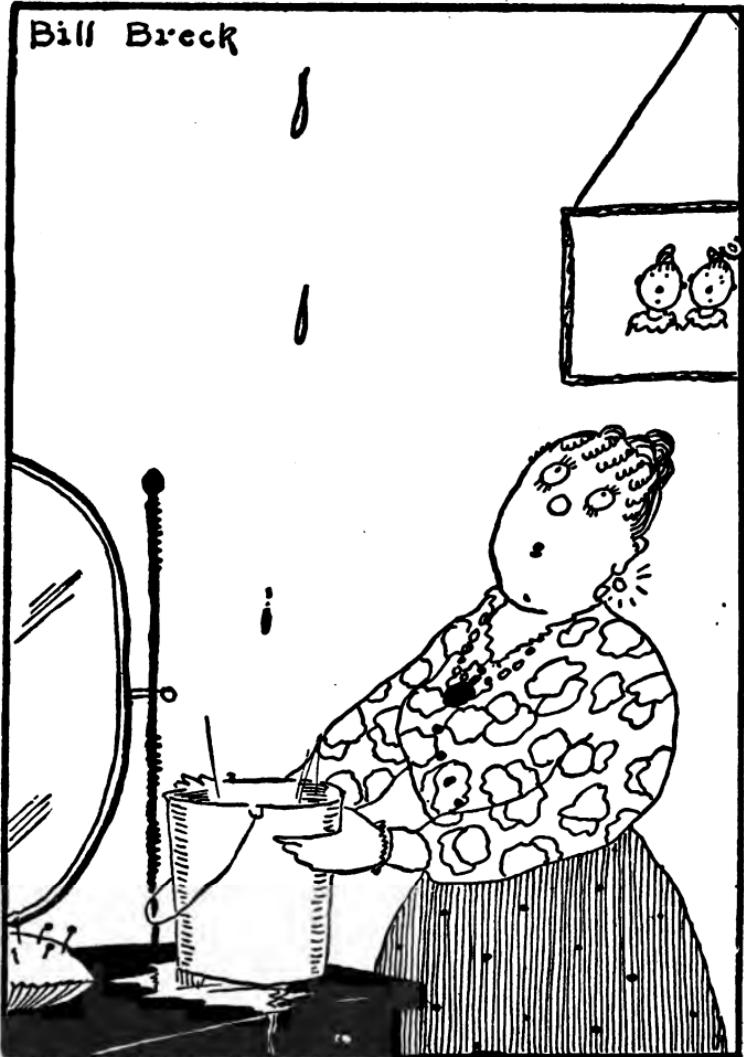
figgerin how old Id be before I was as rich as Uncle Charlie. The answer made Mathuzelum look like a kid. I heard a little splash over in the corner. Then another. It was water drippin on the best buro. Mrs. Smith put a pail under it an sent for the plummer.

A pair of em came next day. Plummers always travel in twos. I suppose its for protection. They looked at the wet place in the ceiling. Then they looked in the pail Mrs. Smith had put on the buro. Then they sat down an looked at each other for a while. At last they decided it might be a leaky pipe an could they use the telephone.

They told Uncle Charlie theyd have to be a hole punched in the ceiling. He said they could go ahead as soon as hed laid down some sheets. That seemed to surprise em. They explained, they was plummers an couldnt touch plaster. Hed have to get a couple of mason contractors to punch the hole. Then if he still wanted the leak fixed theyd come back an do it for him some time when they had time. So Uncle Charlie told em to ship up the masons.

The next day they came with a waggon load of ladders an boards. You might have thought they was goin to plaster a church. They brought em all up in my room. Then they borrowed a step ladder from Mrs. Smith an used that.

Bill Breck



"MRS. SMITH PUT A PAIL UNDER IT"

One of em had a piece of paper with some drawin on it. After theyd looked at it they started excavatin on the other side of the room from where the leak was. I tried to explain that theyd probably find the pipe somewhere near where it was leakin. They says they didnt know nothin about that. They was workin from plans the plummers had made. They guessed the plummers knew their bisnis.

After theyd taken down half the ceilin they found there wasnt any pipe there. That puzzled em. They got out their drawin an took it over to the light. Then one of em guessed that wasnt a door but a windo. Perhaps theyd been lookin at the pictur upside down.

It struck em as a good joke on the plummers It reminded them of the time they got the house numbers mixed an started tearin down the wrong place by mistake. They found it out before they got the roof half off so there was no harm done. Theyd only charged the owner half price for puttin the roof back. An instead of apresheatin it he wanted to sue em. There was no such thing as gratitude.

It didnt seem worth while for them to start punchin through a new place that night. It was after three o'clock an they had to quit in an hour. They would take that long to get their tools picked

Bill Bicker



"AFTER THEY'D TAKEN DOWN HALF THE CEILIN"

up. I never saw two fellos that had pickin up timed so well. The last tool went into the bag one minit of four.

The next day they came back an cut a new hole. Then the plummers looked it over again. They says it was a bad place. Part of the floor would have to be cut away. Uncle Charlie said from what he could see the whole house must have been built around that one piece of pipe. He offered to go down an get them a saw.

They told em it was against the Union rules for them to saw. Theyd send some carpenters around in the morning. Uncle Charlie says the heck they would. Hed stay home from the office an do it himself if he had to. The plummers told him all right but if he did accordin to the rules theyd have to quit work on the job.

Uncle Charlie gave in an the carpenters came. I was gettin interested. I used to lie an figger out how many men it would take to build a house. Its a good way to put yourself to sleep.

The carpenters started cuttin everything away that held anything up. I expected the upper part of the house to be lyin on my bed before they got through. Then the two plummers came back. They stuck their heads through the ceiling an said it was just what theyd thought — a leaky water pipe. There was some wires in the way still. If

Uncle Charlie still wanted to go ahead fixin the pipe hed have to call in the elektrishuns to cut them.

They forgot to tell the elektrishuns what wires they wanted cut. They sneaked around the next day an cut the telephone wires outside the house. Then they went down in the cellar an moved the meter. Not bein able to think of anything else to do they went home without sayin a word to anybody.

We waited a couple of days without any fone. Then the plummers dropped in. They said elektrishuns often did little things like that. Not to worry. Theyd have it fixed in a few days. Like as not they wouldnt charge us a cent for it.

At last everything was set for fixin the pipe. The plummers came an looked at it for the last time. Then they went home an got their tools.

Next day the elektrishuns and the carpenters and the plasterers came back. The last one hadnt been gone more than half an hour when I heard a little splash. A drop of water hit between the pin cushun an the china match safe. I put back the bucket. I havnt had the heart to tell Uncle Charlie yet.

He hasnt been the same man since the leak started. He says a plummer gets twice as much as a college professor. Now I know how to get as

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rich as Uncle Charlie an maybe richer.

So the next time you see me Ill probably be carryin a monkey rench in my vest pocket instead of a fountin pen. I hope your father never has any trouble with his fixins.

Yours till the last plummer starves

*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

I always thought I might have been artistik if I hadnt been frekkled. I guess I havnt got the right temperature tho. I went to an artists party the other night an found out all about it. In the first place you got to be double jointed. An you got to cut your hair off or let it grow accordin to how it was when you started. An most of all you got to starve. You cant be an artist on a full stummick.

The trouble started when I ran into Harry Hoop on the street the other day. He used to be a mekanik in my battery. The Captin made him that cause he put himself down as an artist on his qualifikashun card. He told Harry it would give him a chance to paint the guns an work in oils.

I hadnt seen Harry since he was discharged. From just lookin him over I thought he might be

huntin for a barber shop. He told me he was still an artist. I couldnt find out what kind. I guess he is a general artist. I ast him how much a week he got for that. He says nothin. It was the joy of work for him. That kind of surprised me. He never seemed to get an awful lot of joy out of it in the army.

Harry ast me down to a party in his rooms the next night. He thought there would likely be a lot of intelligent people there but to come down anyway. I might like it.

He must have been countin his close closet when he said rooms. When I got there a lot of people was sittin around loose. They was hung over chairs an thrown into corners. The place looked like the Enginears had been layin down a smoke barage. It was some time before I could figger which was men an which wasnt. I told Harry if Id known it was a fancy dress party I had a dandy wholigan suit with a mask. Harry says these was just artists, tho, in their workin close.

Most of em seemed to have trouble sittin in their chairs right. Their legs bothered em. Some hung em over the backs of the chairs. Others over the arms. A few folded em up an sat on em.

I found a place on the floor next to a fello that would have made a nice lookin undertaker if hed brushed up a bit. He told me his name was Harold

Pintle. He was a writer. I ast him what he wrote. He didnt seem to think Id ever heard of him cause hed never published nothin. Nobody understood him. I told him not to worry. Hed get onto the languige quick enough when he got goin. He says it wasnt that. He wouldnt rite stuff people liked cause it was a sign it was no good. Hed rather write good stuff that nobody liked an starve. He seemed to be succeedin.

Pretty soon a fello went over to the piano. From the looks of his hair they must have dragged him out of bed. He started playin with his legs crossed an sittin sideways to it like he didnt care much. He had trick eye balls. Hed roll em back like he was lookin in his mind. I never saw a fello look so sad when he played. He seemed to know he could never get any better.

After hed played awhile he began to get sore at the thing an bang it with his fists an elbows. I told Harry he could probably finish it up quicker an not tire himself so much by usin a piece of lead pipe. He gave it up after a while. It was bilt to strong for him. Everybody just sighed. I dont blame em. Hed certinly made an awful racket.

Over in the corner was a fello that didnt seem to be gettin much fun out of the party. He kept lookin at something on the ceilin with his mouth open. I went over an sat down by him to see what

it was but there didnt seem to be anything. I ast him what he did to starve. He says he didnt do nothin yet. He was goin to rite somethin butiful tho as soon as he found a good place to work in.

Then he told me how hed been lookin for years an never found a place with just the right atmosphere. I ast him was he goin to write a book on smells or what. If he was I could give him the adreses of a lot of places we stayed in over in France.

I never did find out cause just then a fello jumped up kind of wild an says hed read us some free verse hed done. After Id heard it I could see how he wouldnt have the nerve to charge anything for it. Before he started he went around an gave a copy of it to everybody. Heres what I drew.

Splashes of sunlight. Forms flashing.

Round and round.

Swirling. Incomprehensible.

Twittering youth.

And I feel the East wind sighing through my  
bare feet.

To and fro.

Muscles aquiver and splendor of manhood.

Singing joyful Johannas. (I think its Jo-  
hannas, Mable. Its sort of blotted here)

I thought it was one of those games we used to play back in Philopolis where youd write something on a paper an fold it over an hand it to the next fello. Somebody ast me what I thought of it. I sez I thought it would be a lot of fun but I didnt know just how to play it.

Harry told me that was the fello that lived with him. He was a starvin painter. I says if a fello was starvin it was a good idear to write something like that. He wouldnt want to eat for some time. I couldnt see why a painter had to starve these days tho. They are gettin \$8 dollars a day. That was more then the carpenters or bricklayers.

Harry warned me they might call on me so I better get something ready. I thought Id play a joke an get things shook up. I looked around and found a book called Essays on Eliza by a fello named Lamb. I opened it anywhere an wrote down the first few words of each line on a piece of paper one right after the other.

When they ast me to do something I says Id read em a piece of potry Id wrote free like the other gent. I figgered Id have the laugh on him all right. This is how it went

Rest to the soles

Breed long extinct

The most tasteless of all cold meats

Running smoothly through the golden time

Bill Breck



**"A FELLO JUMPED UP KIND OF WILD AN SAYS HED READ US SOME  
FREE VERSE"**

Upholding the burden of the frame  
Scythe of the gentle bleeder  
Cracking their teeth  
Fretting, half blessing, half cursing.

I thought they laugh their heads of to see what a dub the other fello was. They didnt tho. They all crowded around me an says it was the most butiful thing theyd ever heard. I had a great future if I stick to free verse. I told em not to worry. I didnt expect anybody to start biddin for it.

Well, Mable the ex an import bisnis looked good to me today. I like the feelin of knowin what everybody is goin to do. Id hate to have the head clerk sit with his legs over the back of the chair. Or the tiperiters throw themselves down on the floor in the corner. The only fello that seemed in any danger of bein an artist was the office boy. An I gave him a quarter to get his hair cut this morning.

Yours inartistically  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

I just spent Sunday visitin the mountins with Uncle Charlie an family. They told me it was the mountins. I didnt get far enough away from

the hotel to find out. Thats the troubel with goin to such an expensive place. You feel youre bein cheated if you go out for a minit.

I always know when Aunt Harryet wants to take a trip. I catch Uncle Charlie lookin at himself in the office mirror. He asks me if I dont think hes pail. Once I says "No" an he called me an unobservant ass. Then he begins talkin about overwork an the shortness of life. The more Aunt Harryet wants to go away the shorter life gets.

We rode all night in a sleepin car to get there. I didnt sleep a wink I was so cold. I once read "Peerys Dash at the Pole." But I never knew before what he suffered. I even had my hat an necktie over me. About happast six the porter stuck his finger in my eye an woke me up. I dont understand the way people act in sleepin cars. I know fellos that would feel bad if you saw them with their collars off. On a sleepin car, tho, theyll crawl out of bed with their hair like a Buffalo robe an stamp up an down the ile in their undershirts like they was proud of em.

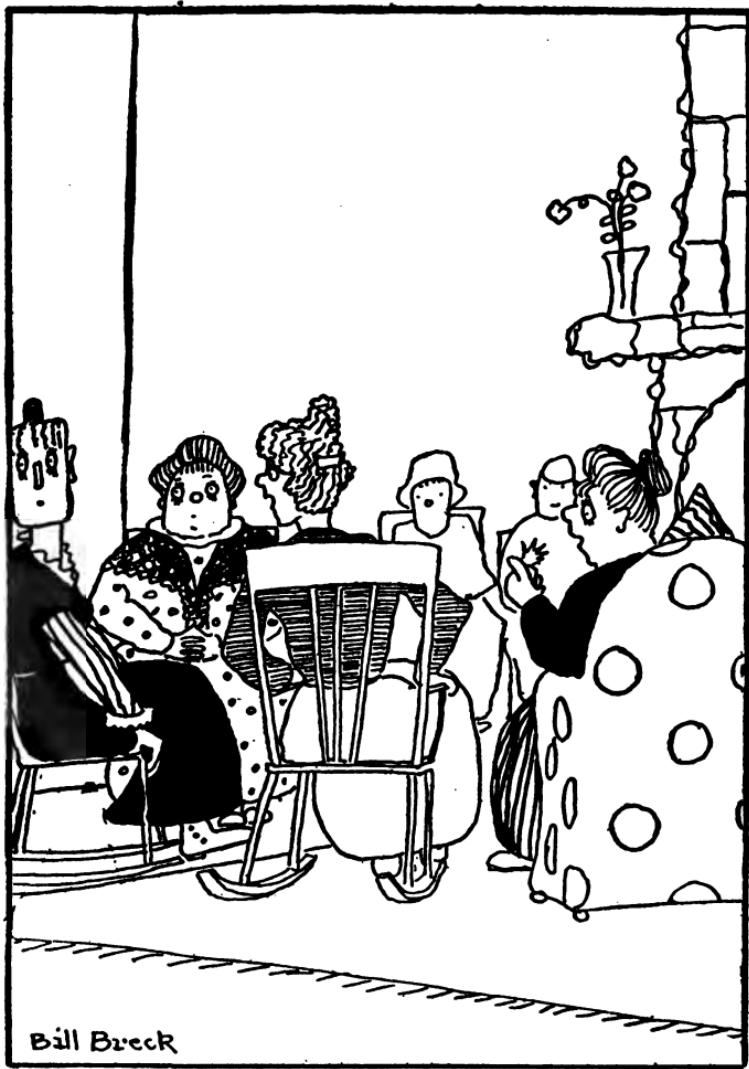
There was a lether herse waitin for us at the stashun. As soon as we got in a fello pulled down the curtain in back an buttoned it. They wasnt takin any chances of our seein any other hotel than theirs.

I never ate such a breakfast. It was a Tabled Oat hotel where you got to eat whether you want to or not. Uncle Charlie never has anything home but eggs an coffee. As soon as he got here, tho, he had fruit an serial an eggs an coffee an rolls. Then he claimed this was the most expensive hotel in the mountins an ordered pan cakes.

After breakfast Aunt Harryet an her dawter started writin letters. Uncle Charlie says this letter bisnis was to much for him. If they stayed a month theyd never catch up. He wouldnt dare ask his tiperiters to work half as hard. The funniest thing was that when they was home theyd go around the block to dodge the people they was writin to. Somehow free letter paper seemed to affect a woman like a sunset does a poet.

There was a big fire at one end of the office. After theyd wrote everybody they could think of they sat around this an waited for the mail. I never saw a bunch so crazy for their mail. Uncle Charlie sez they must pay cash for everything. None of them ever got anything but newspapers except a couple of old girls about 60. They drew about 10 letters every time. Uncle Charlie said they wrote em to themselves.

What with all the people an the fire an half a dozen radyaters that office would have made a good dryin room. Every once in a while Uncle



**"THEY SAT AROUND AND WAITED FOR THE MAIL"**

Charlie would go out on the piazza an look at the thermomotor. Hed come back shiverin an say it was 2 belo. Aunt Harryet would allow there wasnt anything like the country in winter. Then theyd all move up closer to the fire. Miss Smith was the only one that ever did anything. Shed go upstairs once an hour an put on a different colored sweter an muffler.

Theres only two things to do in a big hotel. Eat an wait for the next meal. I didnt mind eatin so much except gettin to it. The dinin room looked more like a train shed. Theres something queer about a big dinin room. You cant walk straight. The minit I get inside my legs wont behave. I keep bumping into tables an gettin my feet caught under the legs of chairs.

Meal time used to drive Uncle Charlie crazy. When wed sit down hed say "Now lets concentrate for a moment, my dears." Mrs. Smith an her dawter would look at the billy fare an say "Oh, I dont know what I want." Then theyd lay it on the butter an begin findin fault with the women at the next table.

I used to feel sorry for him. Hed sit there sayin "What do you want. Pork or roast beef or chickin?" An nobody payng any atenshun but me. At last hed get sore an order what he liked for everybody. As soon as the waitress brought it

in Mrs. Smith an her dawter would look at it an want to know who ordered that. They never touched it.

After dinner everybody sat in the office lookin at each other. It gave you the feelin that something was goin to happen that never did. There was one old fello that seemed to feel if we didnt have a good time it was his fault. He sat down with us an says hed been comin to this hotel 32 years. Nobody paid any atenshun to him so I says "You must have lived a long way of." Just to be polite. That incurred him an he told us the history of everybody in the office. Then he wanted to play sharades. He says he had a dandy word, "Aborashun," if somebodied think out a way to act "shun." Uncle Charlie says he didnt know about "shun" but the 2nd silibel ought to be easy.

That made the old boy sore. He spent the rest of the evenin tellin the hotel clerk what a dead bunch they was this season. It wasnt like the old days. These people was all new comers. The place was goin to the devil.

Uncle Charlies rooms was right under the roof. If you sat up in bed quick you hit your head on the ceilin. There was two little windos. One of them opened all right. He thought he was lucky to get such nice rooms in the middle of the season.

Mine had a radyater under the windo. It was a race between the air an the heat to see whether I froze to death or smothered. The heat won most of the night. When I went to bed I had four blankets over me. I kept peelin em of through the night like the dance of the 7 vales. Then around gettin up time they shut the heat of so when I went to dress my close was froze to the chair.

Were home again now. I expect Ill feel all right in a few days. Uncle Charlie says its the first time he felt like workin in months. Its funny how far a fello will travel just to have such a rotton time his work looks good to him when he comes back.

I got to quit now. The afternoons most gone an I got a pile of work to do yet. They ought to give me some help on this job. I never seem to catch up with my work. It almost drives me crazy.

yours frantikally  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Three days more an Sandy Claws will be cleanin out your chimney again. This will be the first Crismus in three years I havnt spent smoothin out horses. The one nice thing about bein in the army



**"SAYS HE'D BEEN COMIN TO THIS HOTEL 32 YEARS"**

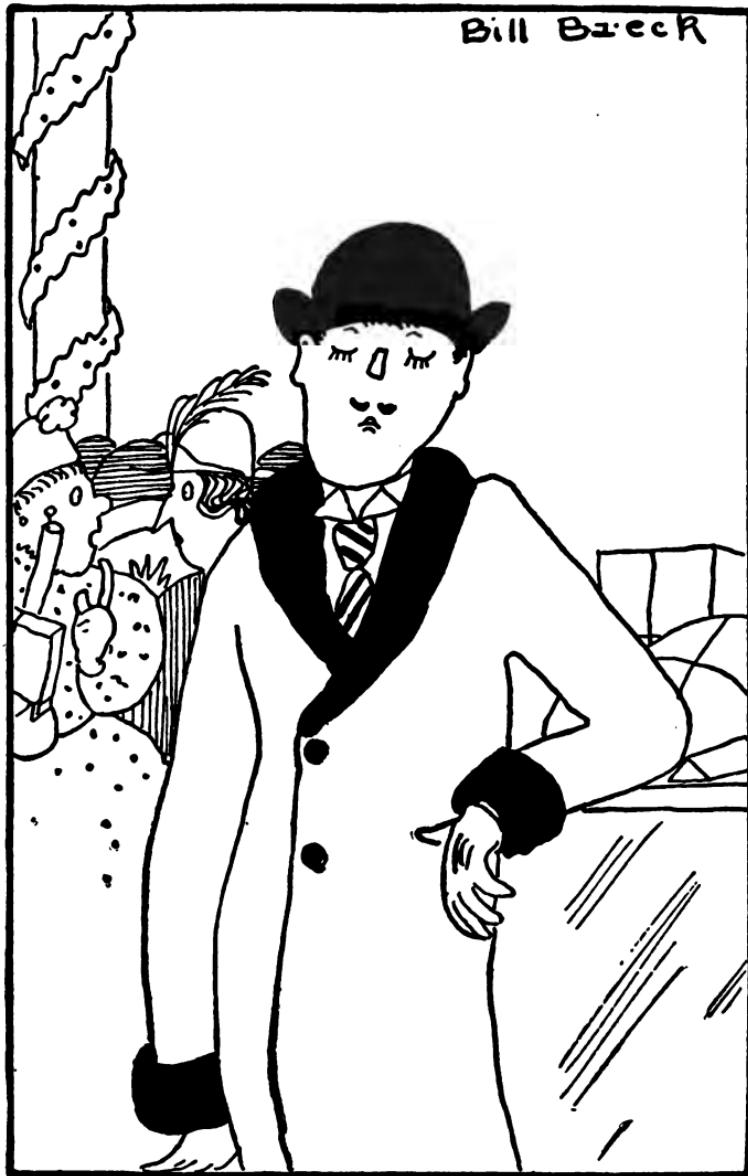
was that you could send home a Fritz tin derby for a Crismus present. They ought to put a claws in the peace treaty makin em keep on ishuin free Crismus presents.

Me an Angus is all wore out tryin to pick out something for Uncle Charlie. The minit you start givin a fello something he seems to have everything in the world. The only person that would be easy is a baby an they dont want anything. We decided to go around to one of the big stores an just tell em we wanted to buy a present. If they was out to make money it was up to them to think what to sell us.

We went around next afternoon. Right inside the door was a fello leanin against the counter. Angus thought like as not he was the manager. So we went up to him and told him we was goin to buy a present for our Uncle who was 5 ft. 8 an smoked. He says our Uncle was a lucky man. He was goin to buy a present himself if his wife ever showed up.

I was tryin to think of a good come back when another fello came up an ast what we were lookin for, please. We told him about the present. He rubbed his chin a while then ast us if wed ever thought about gold rist watches, or diamond stick pins or hansome lether travelin cases. Furniture or table linen was always nice.

Bill Bizeck



"A FELLO LEANIN AGAINST THE COUNTER"

He sounded like he could have kept that up for hours. So we ast where the smokin counter was. He told us to take the 1st elevater to the 5th floor. The elevater man was one of those fellos that liked to show off how he knew all the things you could buy on every floor. There was a whole bunch of women in the elevater but he was a fello without any modesty at all. When he came to the 5th he says "Ladies hozier, lamp shades, youths close, lawn mowers an smokers artikles."

A fat fello that was lookin out the windo came over after a while rubbin his hands. We told him we was in the market for a smokers artikle. He looked around and called "Oh, Mr. McCreery." Mr. McCreery had been lookin out the windo too. He acted like Crismus depressed him. The fat fello says "Smokers artikles, Mr. McCreery." Then he went back to the windo. It seemed like everybody had their job there. The fat fellos was to call Mr. McCreery.

Mr. McCreery says "Quite so. Quite so." Like hed been thinkin that himself for some time. Then he looked around an called. "Oh, Mr. Wanamaker." He told us to wait. Mr. Wanamaker would be back in a little while. That finished his job an he went back to the windo. No wonder things cost so much.

Mr. Wanamaker showed up at last. He said

he had the snappiest line of smokers artikles in town. He showed us cigaret boxes with girls heads on the covers an ash trays with hearts painted on em an cigar holders carved like Indian heads. Angus says the more smokers artikles he saw the more he thought a couple of neck ties would be the present.

So we thanked Mr. Wanamaker an went down to the neck tie man. He had about 90 thousand ties folded up in the show case. They must have taken hours to fix up like that. The minit we menshuned neck tie he began pullin em out an throwin em in heaps on the counter.

I never saw a fellow so crazy about neck ties. Hed grab one out of the pile an wrap it around his finger so it looked like it was tied when it wasnt. Hed hold it up to the light all smiles an say "Nobby, Nobby."

After wed fingered em all over Angus says you couldnt go wrong on a book. So we left the neck tie man to spend Crismus puttin the ties back. The book man ast did we want something to read ourselves or give away. We told him we wanted a book for a man about 5 ft. 8 in. an quite fat. He says he had just the thing.

He showed us "Turnstiles of Anshunt Greece in 5 colors for \$6 dollars" an "Rambles in Rumania for \$3.50 dollars." He says the last had

more pages for the money than any book in the store. I didnt think anything there was just what Uncle Charlie would want. That puzzled him. He ast what didnt we like about the books. Was it the shape or the color.

We decided about the most sensibel thing after all was an umbrela. So we went to the third floor to look at one. The umbrela girl showed us one that she says was changable silk an awful pretty when the sun shined on it. Somehow I couldnt see Uncle Charlie usin it on sunny days, tho. She had green ones with aligator handles an blue ones that folded in two. But out of the whole bunch not a real umbrela.

I found one at last lyin behind the counter. We were goin to buy it when a bell rang in the corner. I thought first it must be a fire. She lost interest in us right away and started putting the umbrelas back as fast as she could. She says that was the 5.30 bell. It was time to go home now.

So we had to wait. Monday I got Uncle Charlie talkin about Crismus presents to see if I could find out what he liked. He says more money was wasted on presents every year than on the war. If anybody gave him an umbrela or a fancy book or any comedy neck ties this year he was goin to send em back.

BILL BREWER



**"HE SHOWED US CIGARET BOXES WITH GIRLS HEADS ON THE COVERS"**

Tomorrows Crismus Eve. We havnt got a present for him yet. I got yours a week ago. I guess youll like it. I never saw one before but the girls says everybody was wearin em. She ought to know better than me. I wish I knew what to give Uncle Charlie. Wishin you as merry a Crismus as you can have with me not there I am

yours indecisively

*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Merry Crismus is over. I missed you even worse than I used to in the army. You didnt mind Crismuses so much there. Everybody was in the same boat. Half this bisnis of bein lonely is thinkin the other fello is havin a better time some other place. If you knew what everybody else was doin youd never miss em.

Me an Angus wasnt lookin forward to Crismus at Mrs. Bodegas boardin house. All the boarders was awful mistereus about where they was goin to spend it. Mrs. Bodega told me private she didnt think half of them was goin to spend it anywhere. People get ashamed of not havin any place to go. Theyd rather hide somewhere all day than let on. The few that were goin to stay were so grouchy they wouldnt hang up their socks

in the dinin room. They says somebodied swipe em.

Uncle Charlie came through like a man by askin me an Angus out to his place.

All the way out he talked about givin useful presents. Hed sort of slipped it along to the whole family that if they had to give him a present to make it something besides pincushuns an vaces. Like a muffler for instance.

Me and Angus not havin been able to decide what to give him sneaked down to the village Crismus eve. All the stores had a complete line of everything useless. At last we saw two mufflers in a windo. Angus says that was the thing cause Uncle Charlied spoke about em.

I never knew they cost so much. The man told us the price had gone up cause the big muffler men was hoardin em. The greatest insentive to goin round in a barrel these days is tryin to buy a hankerchef.

Crismus morning everybody was up early to open their presents. Uncle Charlie was kind of grouchy. He couldnt see why presents wasnt just as good after breakfast as in the middle of the night. He chirped up tho when he saw how many packages hed got. He started tearin em all open. Aunt Harryet stopped him, tho, an made him untie all the nots an take the paper off careful so she

could save it for next year. Uncle Charlie says women spent half their time savin string an paper an the other half blowin a months salary on a hat.

The first package he opened was a muffler. He says "There. Thats a real useful present." Aunt Harryet grabed the card an sez "Isnt that awful. Its from Mrs. Pardee an we never sent her a thing." Crismus to Aunt Harryet is like a horse trade. Uncle Charlie told her that wasnt the Crismus spirit. He was tickled to death to get a present out of somebody when he hadnt gave them one.

The next package was Anguses. He told Angus he was a fine lad an hed always said so. Angus has been wonderin since who he said it to. He certainly kept it a secret from him. Then he opened mine. He said a man couldnt have to many mufflers. If he kept his neck warm he didnt have to worry much about what else he wore. He ought to try a night gown.

I could see the rest of the family was gettin restless about something. Then Uncle Charlie started undoin one muffler after the other. For the first half dozen he insisted a fello couldnt have to many. Then he says that stuff about the war givin people imaginashun was bunk. Aunt Harryet told him it was his own fault for talkin about mufflers. They all thought he was hintin. He

Bill Breck



"CRISMUS WAS THE SADDEST DAY IN THE YEAR"

cheered up after a while an told her she could sew some of them together an make him a fancy vest an maybe a warm pair of pajamas.

That night there was a big dinner. Uncle Charlie explained how he gathered in all the family barnacels every year; fed em an sent em home. They began colectin about 4 oclock. The first one there was an old fello they called Gran-father Hazlett. He was delivered in a wheel chair like a bundle. Granfather Hazlett didnt have much to say for a while. Then he heaved an awful groan an told us we better make the most of him cause this was his last Crismus on earth. I felt kind of sorry for the old gent but Uncle Charlie says I was wastin my time. Hed had more final apearances than Suthern Marlow, the acter. Aunt Harryet expected to see him sittin by her grave while she was bein lowered into it.

He was the life of the party tho compared to Uncle Charlies Aunt Matilda. When he wished her a merry Crismus she ast him not to make fun of her. Crismus was the saddest day in the year. If he spoke of it again shed bust into tears.

She went around tellin everybody they was lookin bad an a lot older. She guessed we was all decayin like the trees an flowers. At last she fasened herself on Granfather Hazlett. They began fightin about when the end of the world was

comin an seemed to have a pretty good time out of it.

After dinner everybody went out of the room an Uncle Charlie set up a paste board fire place with a chimney an everything in front of the door. His idear was to come through the chimney dressed like Sandy Claws an surprise the kids.

Then everybody came back an after a while we heard slaybells outside. Somebody says "All right. Put in another pin you darn fool." A minit later Uncle Charlie stuck his head through a little door in the back of the fire place. He was all dressed up like the fellos in the department store windos. He says "Merry Crismus." Then he hit his head on the top of the fireplace an says "Darnashun." The kids thought that was great.

The party might have been all rite if some kid hadnt saw a china horse away up on the tree. It was hard to get so she wanted it. Uncle Charlie reached across the tree to get it an let his beard sit in one of the candles. The first thing I knew his whole face was lit up like a saint. He yanked off the beard an dropped it in the punch bowl. It spoiled the punch of course an a good part of Uncle Charlies face.

Everybody forgot about Sandy Claws after that an began tellin about narrow escapes they had from fallin off boats an gettin run over an the like.

To here em talk youd think the trapeze fellos in the circus led a quiet life. I guess they had a better time than watchin Uncle Charlie anyhow.

Thanks a lot for your Crismus present. I hope you got mine all right. I sort of feel next Crismus Ill be in Philopolis. They say a big city is the only place to make money. The only way I can see to make it is in some counter fitters office. I wish somebodied explain it to me.

yours doubtfully  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

Here we are startin on a new calinder. An old Father Time gets his pictures on the covers of the magyzines again goin out to cut hay in a night-dress. I never like the beginning of the year. You always give up so many things that the first two or three weeks arent any fun at all.

One thing me an Angus both resolved was never to be late to the office again. I dont know why it is but were always just 9 minits late. If we was only supposed to get there at 9 minits past 9 wed be on time. As long as I can remember Ive tried to dress an shave in less than 20 minits. I never been able to do it yet. Every morning, tho, I lie in bed an think if I hurry a little more this



**"DROPPED IT IN THE PUNCH BOWL"**

morning 15 minits will be enuff. The colder the room the quicker you think you can dress.

Another thing was smokin. We decided to cut out smokin durin workin hours except after breakfast an lunch. Uncle Charlie has a rule against smokin in the office anyway so that seemed the best time.

Then Im goin to keep a direy. It will be nice for my children later on. Ive always wanted to know if father was such a whiz as he sez he was when he was a young man. I got one for Crismus. Angus calls it a "Lie a Day" book. You just put down the big thing every day. Then next year you write underneath it an find what you did a year ago. Angus thinks that would be depressin. I got so keen about it I wrote up New Years before it came around. I knew pretty well what I was goin to do anyway. Im behind a couple of days now an it worries me. I never saw a thing that could get on your mind so.

Angus says the only reason for keepin a direy is in hopes somebodyll read it after your dead an know what a fine fello you really was. In that case it isnt safe to put everything down you do. If you dont why not just write a book about yourself some day.

I have a hunch Uncle Charlie is goin to make me a pardner pretty soon the way hes actin. Yes-



**"IM GOIN TO KEEP A DIREY"**

terday he took me out to a bisnis lunch with him. He says its a shame a fello hasnt got time enough in his office to do his bisnis without carryin it out to lunch with him. As near as I can figger out the more money a fello gets the less work he has to do an the less work he has to do the more rushed he is.

Yesterday mornin a fello came in the office an wanted to see him right away. When I went in to tell him he was lookin out the windo whisselin. As soon as he heard somebody was waitin he put both hands to his head an groand. He says they was drivin him grey haired. He didnt have time to open his mail. He couldnt see this fello that was all. What he would do, tho, was to take him out to lunch.

He ast me to come along. It seems the fello was a rubber man. I could lissen an pick up some pointers on the inside of the ex an import bisnis. He was a big customer so Uncle Charlie went to his club insted of the place he usually eats.

When we got there he an the rubber man sat for about half an hour in a big room covered with sines "Silence Please." They talked about the servant problem an the high cost of shoes. The idear seemed to be not to menshun rubber or eatin.

We went in to lunch at last an they spent most of their time tellin about how good they was at

Bill Breck



"A BIG FAT FELLO CAME ALONG"

golf. Uncle Charlie plays a good dinner table game. When they got down to the chockolate aklares Uncle Charlie says "Now, Harrison, about that rubber shipment of yours," like it had only occured to him that minit.

Just then a big fat fello came along an slapped Uncle Charlie on the back. He wanted to know why he hadnt been around the club lately. Nobody seemed awful glad to see him but he pulled up a chair an says he was sorry but hed just had his lunch. Hed force down a piece of pie or something though to be sociabel.

That fello knew more about the stock market than old boy Swift himself. He told us everything that had happened for the last month an why. He knew just what was goin to happen an what stocks was good an what wasnt. It looked like a great chance to pick up some money. At last Uncle Charlie paid for the lunch an we got up to go. The fat fello cornered him behind a table. I thought he was goin to give him a red hot tip so I kept my ears open. I heard him ask Uncle Charlie if hed lend him five dollars for a day or two.

We sat around till it looked as if wed knocked of work for the day. About three Uncle Charlie says hed have to run. He was so rushed he didnt have time to eat lunch proper. An regardin that

rubber deal he was willin to go through with it the way theyd wrote. The best way was for him to get in touch with his western man an for the rubber man to get in touch with his South American man. Then theyd get together again.

They shook hands an says it was a go. Uncle Charlie seemed awful pleased with himself. He thought theyd got somewhere even if he did have to talk bisnis all durin lunch. Its to much for me Mable.

Today its snowin. There a milyun men down in the street throwin it into wagons an hawlin it away. Those fellos that used to rite pomes about the beautiful snow would have a hard time makin a livin here. Somehow Id like to run over an shovel your steps for you like I used in the old days. Funny what fun shovelin can be when you cant do it any more. Good by Mable. One of my resolutions is not to waste any more time in the office. I must get to work.

yours tirelessly

*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

I found one way to beat the high cost of livin. I acted last Saturday in the movies. Not that I made so much money. I didnt make any. But

I'll never go to the movies again. So I ought to save that way.

I was walkin along the street the other day figgerin how I could save money by turnin my suit inside out. Only I couldnt see what to do about the button holes. Just then I met Joe Loomis with a new pair of shoes. I ast him if hed struck oil or somethin. He says no he was in the movies. I wanted to know how I could do that. Joe says he might be able to get me a job actin as a soup Saturday afternoons. It paid darn well. I couldnt see how a fello was goin to act as a soup. Id be a clam chouder tho to wear close like Joe.

He called me up next day an said to come out Saturday. He had a nice soldier part for me in a picture called "Nights of Old." I told him I didnt want to get into anything that wasnt respectable. You might see it an not like it. Joe says it was respectable but I might get knocked around a bit cause there was a fight in one place. I told him to worry more about the other fellos.

So next Saturday I went out. They met me at the door an took me to see a fello called Rosein-bloom. He didnt look it. After lookin me over he says he was afraid I wouldnt do. I explained how Id done Mack Beth once in high school. I guessed I could fit a soldiers part all right. He

says it wasnt a question of fittin a part but a uniform. They bought the close first an then picked out the acters to fit em. He might fix me up, tho, if I didnt mind squeezin a little an standin up all the time I had my uniform on.

At last they got me into a pair of red tights. They certinly was tights too. If I raised so much as a blister theyd have flew to pieces. Somebody gave me a tin helmut an a bent sord an told me to go down an wait in the truck with the rest of the army.

We drove out to a place where there was a creek with a high bank on one side. The camera man an a fello with his hair all mussed up an a megafone was standin near it. They explained how the hero was goin to have a love sene here. When he got thru four assissins would rush out an try an kill him. Only insted of killin him theyd get thrown in the creek. There was a little house down the line where we could get dry by the fire. They picked me out for one of the assassins.

He told us not to do what they did in the last picture an fall down before anybody hit us. That wasnt realistik. We was to fight good an hard an not be scared of gettin hurt. There was a doctor in atendance. I didnt care for the way he talked but it was to late.

They hid us behind some bushes to wait for the

hero. I like to have froze. Its all right to make these army scenes realistik but when they ishue summer tights in winter its carryin it to far.

Pretty soon he drove up in a Ford limosine. I didnt like him from the start. He had on a red cape an feathers in his hat as if he couldnt decide whether he was the hero or the heroin. When he came struttin out in front of the camera with his hand on his stummick, the man with the megafone says "Look for the heroin." She was standin about ten feet away. The big simp must have been half blind tho cause he put his hand over his eyes an looked all around.

The megafone man sez "Register disappointment," an he made an awful face. After that the heroin came out an stood behind him. He still didnt see her. She stretched out her arms an says "Get it over, Harry. Im near froze."

Then the hero turned around an took her in his arms. He looked in her eyes an says "Im goin to strike for a raise for this winter work. Its bad enough starvin to death without freezin to."

The heroin started to go. She turned back again awful quick, tho, an puttin her hands on his shoulder she looked in his eyes again an says "Your standin on my dress, you darn fool." When shed gone he stood lookin after her with his hand on his heart. Then he calls out "Will



**"FELL OVER LIKE THEY WAS 9 PINS"**

you start that car for me. I dont want the rady-  
ater to freeze." I must say I couldnt figger out  
the plot very well.

The man on the platform yelled for the assassins to sneak in an kill the hero. I felt I could do some real actin if theyd give me a chance. We crept up behirid him an jumped on his back. He just swung around quick an three of the assassins fell over like they was 9 pins. I thought perhaps the hero might be stronger than he looked. So I hung around the outside to see what was goin to happen.

I never saw three fellos so unsteady on their feet as the assassins. Every time the herod push em theyd roll right over. Then he grabbed one around the waist an shoved him over the bank into the water. The next one stood up an got the same thing. Then the third. I could hear em hit the water an cuss because it was so cold.

Then the big bluff turned to me. By that time Id forgot about the picturs. All I knew was that I wasnt goin to catch amonia lettin a fello with curly hair push me into no creeks. So when he grabbed me I just wouldnt come. Then he clipped me behind the ear. That was to much. I shoved his head under my arm an dragged him over to the edge of the bank. You never heard such a holler as he put up when he was goin over.

I thought theyd all be with me after that. That bunch didnt have any sense of umor tho. They wouldnt even pay me cause they says Id spoiled the fillum. I thought Id improved it. I guess the movies are better to look at than to do. These artists have to much temperature for me.

yours inartistikaly  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

I had an awful nite mare last nite. I dremt I was the Prince of Whales. Me an Angus had been readin about him before we went to bed. I dremt he came to me an offered me \$2 ½ dollars to take his place for a day. It seems we looked just alike. He said the Pry Minister bored him. If he didnt get away from him a while he was afraid hed kill him.

I took him right up an slept that night in the royal sweet. The next mornin a fello woke me up bowin an sez "Your Royal Harnesses bath is drawn." I told him he could draw it out again. Thered be weeds in it before I got up. Then three others came in. They looked about as full of fun as the Smith Brothers. Everybody treated my bedroom like it was a hotel lobby.

It seems one of them was the Pry Minister. He ast did my Royal Harnesses forget the Mayor

was goin to make him a speech of welcome at ten o'clock? An that we had to go through a lot of factories before lunch? I told him I wasnt much of a fan on factories. An if the Mayor wanted to make me a speech there was no reason why he couldnt do it while I was in bed.

They whispered together a minit. Then they regretted my Royal Harnes was indisposed. The court docter would be right up. The docter didnt seem much worried. He said it was the same old trouble an Id take my usual dose. Would I take it in orange or lemon juice. I told him I felt better already. I thought Id get up an keep some engagements with a couple of Mayors.

After breakfast we drove to a big hall. I couldnt keep my high hat on in the auto. The Pry Minister said not to forget the trick he learned me of takin it off to bow all the time. That was the way all famous men had to manage toppers in autos.

The hall was filled with people. When we came on the platform an old fello with a red bandage across his chest got up and talked. They told me that was the Mayor. Pretty soon the Pry Minister leaned over an tapped me. He says it would look better if my Royal Harnes didnt go to sleep while the Mayor was talkin. My mouth seemed to come open.

At last the Mayor turned around an said it gave him great pleasure to present me with the freedom of the city. That seemed silly cause I could go wherever I wanted before. I saw he meant all right tho. I got up to tell him if he ever came to Ingland Id tipp the police off to let him run loose to. Just then the Pry Minister slipped me a paper an sez "Your Royal Harnes will read that an nothin else."

I started to read it but it was awful long and dry. Besides it didnt mean anything. So I tried readin every other line. That worked fine. When I got through everybody clapped, cheered an went home except a few that was awful sound sleepers.

Then the Mayor says wed have to hurry down to the factories. On the way down I looked behind an saw a lot of motor cicle cops chasin us. I thought we was pinched sure. The Pry Minister explained they was to keep people from throwin bums at us. When we got to the factory theyd walk around in the crowd an try to spot the fellos that was out to kill me.

I told him I hadnt wanted to go to the old factories in the first place. If they didnt want me there what was the sense. The Pry Minister had a one track mind tho.

He told me after we got there I was to stop

every 7th man an say "How goes it my good fello?" Then no matter what he answered I was to say "Im glad to hear it. Thats very gratifying." Loud, sos the newspaper men could hear me.

There was such a jam in front of the factory I thought there must be a strike on. I went up to a big fello in overhauls an sez "How goes it my good fello?" He sez "Sick in bed. Hows your self?" I sez "Glad to hear it. Thats very gratifying." Then I ducked behind a packing case cause I didnt see no motor cicle cops around.

When we came out of the second factory the Pry Minister whispered that Id forgot to kiss any babies. Id better go through half a dozen right there. I looked over the babies an told em he could kiss em himself. I wasnt *runnin* for Prince of Whales — *I was*.

Then we went to a big lunch that was being given me. I had a pretty good time there till that big kill-joy leaned over an sez "The Prince will only take one helping of everything." Then he handed me a speech done up in pink ribbon. I read every other line till I got tired. Then every 4th line. When I finished everybody came up an shook hands sayin it was the best speech theyd ever heard.

I ast the Pry Minister after lunch if he wouldnt

BiLL BiEcK



"I LOOKED OVER THE BABIES"

like to go out to a ball game. He said of course not. We had some important ingagements. First we watched them pull the cover of an old statue. Then down to a park where a milyun children was all singin at the same time. They just wouldnt quit. A lot of wimmin stood around behind them. Every time a kid stopped theyd shake it to start it goin again like an old Ingersol.

I told the Pry Minister he could stay here an tell the kids it was fine. I guessed Id run along. He says I couldnt go till Id had my pictur taken patting one of em on the head.

When I got back to the hotel I was a reck. I figgered Id have a good dinner an go to bed. It seemed they were givin a big hop for me that nite tho so I had to go. There was a lot of good lookin girls standin around. I thought I might have some fun out of the day yet.

Just as I was goin to ask one of them to dance the Pry Minister comes up an hands me a piece of paper. It had names wrote on it. He said I was to dance with those people in just that order an nobody else.

The first one on the list was about 40. You couldnt have weighed her on anything less than a hay scale. I could see the Pry Minister was makin a monkey out of me. After about an hour I told her I had to mail some letters. Then I



**"YOU COULDNT HAVE WEIGHED HER ON ANYTHING LESS THAN A  
HAY SCALE"**

stood her in a corner an left her by herself.

I hunted up the Pry Minister an told him I was darned if Id dance with any more of his lemons. He said what I wanted had nothin to do with it. That made me sore. I says just for gettin fresh Id give him two weeks notice.

He began gettin redder an redder. His vains stood out till I thought he was goin to bust right on the dance floor. Just then I woke up. Angus ast was I goin to sleep all day. I thought first it was the Pry Minister. Then I saw Angus an went to sleep again.

Ive certinly felt sorry for the poor old Prince of Whales ever since. I wish I could do some-  
thin for him. Im afraid hes just plum out of luck tho. Thank my stars I never went into anything on a royalty basis.

yours gratefully  
*Bill*

*Dere Mable:*

I guess youll be surprised to get this. An pretty glad to. Im sendin it speshul delivery sos it will get there before I do. Itll have to hurry, tho, cause Im on my way home for good. I havnt said nothin to you about this but I been thinkin a lot

lately. In the first place Angus is goin back to Skotland to get married. Then I dont think theres any show of Uncle Charlies makin me a pardner for quite a while. Besides Im gettin sort of sick of writin letters. Id rather talk for a while.

I wrote Ezra Kendall the other day. He says hed be glad to take me back any time I wanted to come. Ezras got a pretty level head on him. Hes goin to give me a better job than I had before. The longer I stay here the less sense I can see in everybody jammin up in one little place an crawlin all over each other like ants. It reminds me of a bunch of horses in a coral. They got the whole field to run around in but they all crowd down in one corner.

I cant figger what its all about. Everybody is always hurryin around like there was a fire. In the mornin they squeeze into a hole in the ground an get jammed on a train. Then they run up to an office somewhere in the clouds. They havnt got time to eat lunch so they rush down stairs an grab a sanwich an a glass of milk from the soda fountin. When they get thru work they tear home to some boardin house. After supper they hurry to bed sos theyll be in shape to make a quick get away the next mornin. Im gettin so I hurry thru my sleep.

It isnt as if everybody was gettin rich. Most

of em is goin the other way. They just seem to forget what its all about an keep on rushin from habit. Im goin to make one more rush, an thats to Philopolis.

I cant hardly wait to get home. I keep thinkin of walkin down to work in the mornin insted of bein shot there thru a tube like change in a department store. An seein somebody I know on the street. An comin up to see you in the evenins insted of lissenin to Mrs. Bodega tell about how shes goin to bankrupcy. An havin something to do Sundays insted of waitin for Mondays.

This has got to be short cause Im in an awful hurry. I want to get out as soon as I can an I got all my affairs to wind up. Like gettin my close back from the lawndry an the like. Its the last time Im ever goin to hurry, tho, except perhaps when Im comin up to see you in the evenins. Maybe I wont have to be comin up to see you long, eh Mable?

No more high finance. No more life of adventurshure for me. Big towns for big simps.

as ever very simply yours

*Bill*

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